



CENTER FOR  
**Dairy**EXCELLENCE

## For Immediate Release

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### **LEARN HOW TO TALK ABOUT FARM TRANSITION TOPICS AT UPCOMING WORKSHOP**

*The Interactive Workshop Will Have Sessions Focused on Family Communication Tips*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – How do we talk about farm transition in productive ways? What are the specific steps involved in the succession plan process? Dairy farm families are invited to the “Passing the Torch” Interactive Transition Planning Workshop on November 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Mechanicsburg, Pa. Hosted by Penn State Extension and the Center for Dairy Excellence, the day-long workshop will cover everything from communication and family dynamics to legal and accounting considerations. The event will include lunch. Registration is \$25 total for the first two family members and \$5 for each additional family member.

“It’s never too early or too late to start thinking about ‘passing the torch’ and finding someone in line to transition ownership of your dairy business,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “We have several families who are planning to join us for this workshop in November, and our goal is to keep the discussions personal and interactive. You’ll participate in one-on-one family roundtable discussions that will be led by outside advisors to keep your family’s communication moving in a productive way.”

Two of the sessions will focus on the communication dynamics involved in farm transition conversations and the appropriate steps to take to keep the farm moving forward for generations. Learn more about these sessions:

- **“How Do We Talk About It?” with Dr. Charlie Gardner.** *“We’d be in a lot better financial shape if you hadn’t bought that.” “Well, if you would get the cows fed on time, we would be shipping a lot more milk.”* These are examples of statements that Dr. Charlie Gardner, a dairy farm consultant, has heard family members say to each other in the midst of challenging conversations. He will share examples of how to keep these types of communication patterns moving in a productive manner. Family members might start out by discussing a potential partnership and transferring assets, but discussions can easily get sidetracked when financial concerns and blame become the focus. Dr. Gardner will offer strategies for overcoming communication roadblocks and how to conclude family business conversations with tasks accomplished.

Dr. Gardner grew up in southern New Jersey and worked on his uncle’s dairy farm. He attended the College of Agriculture at Cornell from 1967 –1969, then transferred to Veterinary College, and graduated from Veterinary School in 1973. He then joined the

Ackermanville Veterinary Hospital, doing mainly dairy cattle practice. He stayed there until 1989, when he started Dairy Management Consultants, a practice specializing in dairy herd management. Dr. Gardner became board certified as a specialist in dairy practice in 1993, and received an MBA from Moravian College in May of 1999. He joined Agway in 1999, and was director of the Agway TSPF Heifer Program. In March of 2004 he joined Cargill Animal Nutrition, and worked with producers to improve animal and financial performance. He retired from Cargill in December of 2014, and has since worked part time as a farm consultant with the Center for Dairy Excellence.

- **“Understanding the Farm Transition Process” with Dr. Brian Reed.** Where are we now? Where do we want to go? How are we going to get there? Assessing the present situation of the farm, including scale, profitability and potential growth opportunities, can allow for productive strategic planning for the future. Dr. Brian Reed, a dairy farm consultant, will share how to incorporate and communicate the goals, interests and concerns of all family members at various stages of their career into the process. He will outline various methods to gradually transition business knowledge, responsibilities, financial assets, and decision-making.

Brian Reed DVM, MBA has spent the last 36 years working with dairy farmers as a veterinarian. Since receiving his MBA degree in 2001, he has also been a dairy business consultant, assisting dairy families with strategic planning, profitability analysis and farm transition planning. Dr. Reed also currently utilizes Center for Dairy Excellence resources to assist farm families going through the farm transition process.

Visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/passing-the-torch](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/passing-the-torch) to register today and view the full program and speakers, or call 717-346-0849. Registration is \$25 total for the first two family members and \$5 for each additional family member. Entire dairy farm families are invited to the event.

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The Center for Dairy Excellence is a non-profit organization initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in 2004. Bringing together people from more than 40 different dairy organizations in Pennsylvania, the Center’s mission is to enhance the profitability of the dairy industry by empowering people, creating partnerships, and increasing the availability and use of resources. Learn more at [centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org).

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