



CENTER FOR  
**Dairy**EXCELLENCE

## For Immediate Release

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### GRANT FUNDING AVAILABLE TO HELP PA DAIRY FARMS FORM ADVISORY TEAMS

*The Center's On-Farm Team Program Is Now Open*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – The Center for Dairy Excellence is now accepting applications for the On-Farm Team Grant Program for the 2023-24 year. Dairy producers who are looking to improve profitability, create a transition plan, or plan a major business transformation are encouraged to apply for one of the team grant opportunities. Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the grant program opened in September of 2023. Limited grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

“The value of these advisory teams is having a sounding board to help dairy producers make decisions using data and experience from consultants who visit different farms,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “These teams have helped dairy farm families make significant decisions about their operations, including investing in robotic milking technology, coming up with new cropping strategies to boost profitability, or creating detailed succession plans between generations.”

The On-Farm Team Grants allow dairy producers to establish on-farm advisory teams with industry experts and trusted advisors to make strategic decisions at the farm level. There are three types of team grants available:

- **Dairy Profit Teams:** This grant offers a focused, broad-based approach to improving herd and dairy business profitability. Dairy farms can receive up to \$1,500 in reimbursements for paid team members and discovery-related costs.

*“We’ve utilized the Profit Team as a sounding board. We would wholeheartedly recommend the program. In terms of the return on investment for our time [spent with the team], it has been really positive. It helps you get a different perspective and fresh eyes on the farm, and the team can share opportunities, ideas, and suggestions on better operational approaches.”* –Chad Fox, Fox Meadows Farm LLC, Lancaster County, Pa.

- **Dairy Transition Teams:** This grant focuses on transition in the business such as succession, change in business structure, or partnership. This grant is designed to help the farm establish a team to develop a transition or succession plan. Farms can apply to receive up to \$3,500 in

funding, which could cover the cost of paid team members, discovery-related costs and lawyer expenses.

*"Without the grant, we wouldn't be where we are. Some of us didn't want to talk about [the transition process] or face reality, but the meetings made us stop and talk about it. It would be hard to spend that money upfront for an advisor without the grant. But I wouldn't do it without a third party consultant walking alongside us. It's so valuable." –Kerry Zeiset, Lancaster County, Pa.*

- **Dairy Transformation Teams:** This grant focuses on modernizing facilities and pursuing a business transformation or additional enterprise within the dairy operation. The Transformation Team allows producers considering a major business transformation to apply to receive up to \$3,500 to establish a team to help plan and work through that transformation. Manure storage facility improvements do not qualify as eligible Transformation Team projects.

*"We definitely found out where our edge is. I would have hated to start this robotics project and then realized all of a sudden we need to cut out [certain aspects]. Now we know how far we can go and how many extra things we can add to this barn. Especially for a farm our size, it's invaluable just how far the grant money went and the information we got out of it. It helped jumpstart everything. It gave me the confidence I needed to move forward with a project like this. It went from a pipe dream to a reality." –Donny Bartch, Merrimart Farms, Perry County, Pa.*

On-farm teams consist of the farm's most trusted advisors, with a facilitator designated to coordinate meetings and workflow. The Center partners with the Penn State Extension Dairy Team, University of Pennsylvania, and private industry to provide resources and expertise to farms involved in the program.

Limited grants are available for the 2023-24 year, and funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Farms must complete an application and submit the required \$100 application fee to participate in each program.

Visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/grants](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/grants) to learn more and apply online. Contact Melissa Anderson at 717-636-0779 or [manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org) with questions.

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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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