For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Emily Barge, 717-346-0849; ebarge@centerfordairyexcellence.org

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DAIRY FARMERS ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT IDEAS IN ANNUAL "FARMER-MADE INGENUITY" CONTEST

The Top Three Entries Will Receive a Cash Prize

Harrisburg, Pa. – Dairy farmers are the original engineers, finding creative solutions to solving common and not-so-common problems on the farm. In the Center for Dairy Excellence's annual "Farmer-Made Ingenuity" Contest, dairy farmers are encouraged to submit inventive solutions that may be hiding in plain sight on many of our dairy farms for a chance to win a $1,000 cash prize. The contest will run from November 3 to December 14, 2026. Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/farmer-made-contest to submit your entry.

"Whether it's choosing the welder over an expensive repair bill or figuring out how to track data on your own to avoid another monthly subscription fee, farmers are constantly looking internally for homemade remedies to create cost-savings, improve their processes, and keep moving forward," shared Jayne Sebright, Executive Director at the Center for Dairy Excellence. "This contest drew a lot of excitement last year as dairy farmers shared their inventions and how they work smarter, not harder. We're looking forward to exchanging more farmer-made ideas and creative solutions this year."

Here are a few examples of creative, farmer-made solutions from last year:

- Calf hutch accessory to keep calves warm in winter
- Silage bucket and defacer built into one
- Homemade bale opener
- Hay and grain feeder for animals on pasture
- Milk cooling solution that fills two bulk tanks at once
- Farmers are encouraged to get creative and think outside the box. Submit any homegrown ideas that have helped you move your farm forward.

"This contest was fun and very simple to enter. Farmers are the true masters of innovation, and we so often need to make changes out of necessity. Some of those fixes are spur of the moment and just a quick patch, while others are long-term improvements that make our daily jobs more efficient and safer. It's amazing what a farmer can fix! Share your ideas and help us all do our jobs a little easier, better and more cost effective. Maybe you will win the grand prize," shared Mary Creek of Palmyra Farm LLC, the contest winner from last year.

To enter the contest, individuals must be a dairy producer or dairy farm employee; must be from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware or New Jersey; must be an original idea developed by the dairy producer and/or dairy employee; and must be an idea that solves a problem on the farm without risking worker safety. The winner will receive a $1,000 cash prize, second place will receive $500, and third place will receive $250.

“The Farmer-Made Ingenuity Contest is a great way to see how other dairy families are creating tools to make their lives easier. I enjoy seeing these homemade inventions and seeing if we can utilize something similar or spark another idea that is tailored to our farm. It’s a great way to help and/or learn from others in the farming community to be able to work smarter, not harder,” shared Donny Bartch of Merrimart Farms, the second-place winner from last year.

The winners will be selected in January 2027 through a digital voting system. All submitted entries may be featured on the Center for Dairy Excellence’s channels. The selected winners will be spotlighted online and at the PA Dairy Summit in February 2027.

Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/farmer-made-contest to enter the contest online. The entry form is simple and asks you to share what you created, why you created it, and how it helped your farm. Contact Emily Barge at 717-788-0300 or via email at ebarge@centerfordairyexcellence.org with questions about the contest.

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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.