



For Immediate Release

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

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BUSINESS CONSULTANTS AVAILABLE TO HELP DAIRY FARM FAMILIES ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

The Center Offers One-on-One Consulting Support at No Charge to Dairy Farm Families

Harrisburg, Pa. – To help Pennsylvania dairy farm families with transition planning, business management consulting, and risk management planning, the Center for Dairy Excellence has several consultants and employees available to work with Pennsylvania dairy farm families. Dr. Brian Reed and Dr. Charlie Gardner both serve as consultants provided by the Center to help dairy farm families navigate the complex process of transition planning, business plan development, and business transformation through one-on-one consulting and support. Zach Myers, Risk Education Manager at the Center, is also available to help dairy farm families develop risk management strategies for their operations.

With years of experience in the dairy industry, the Center taps the knowledge and expertise of these consultants and offers their services at no charge to dairy farm families across the state. The farm families who have utilized one-on-one consulting through the Center have focused on:

- **Business plan development and transformation:**

“About five years ago, I started on a journey to open my own dairy store. Dr. Charlie Gardner helped me write my business plan and has been an exceptional resource to ask questions, get advice, and get other contacts in Pennsylvania who have been working on similar projects,” said Amy Brickner of Destiny Dairy Bar at Stover Farms in Cumberland County, Pa.

“I had done some research on a pizza shop, and I liked the idea of creating a market for our milk. It was rather scary but with the help we had putting a business plan together, and with our own knowledge that you have to work hard and things don’t come easy, we felt we could do it. [Our consultant] helped us learn the best ways to protect ourselves and our employees,” said Jessica Kennedy of Farmer in the Dell Creamery in Venango County, Pa.

- **Transition and succession planning:**

“We’ve been talking about transitioning to an LLC and we’ve been talking about the next generation, but everyone is always so busy. It’s always on the back burner. Finally, we just needed some direction. The Center for Dairy Excellence really provided that. Our consultant has been really good with follow-up, and he makes sure we stay on track. We have monthly meetings where he gives us assignments and expects us to have some progress moving forward. He’s been good at pushing us to make things happen,” said Joanne Stoltzfus of Pennwood Farms in Somerset County, Pa.

“Even though we felt like we were starting at a good place, we didn’t want to see things go south [during the transition planning process]. We wanted to honor everyone and make sure we weren’t missing anything. Having a third party involved really goes a long way in validating all of our feelings about how things should go and listening to what we wanted to accomplish,” said Jared Kurtz of Kurtland Farms in Berks County, Pa.

- **Risk management planning and strategizing:**

“Zach Myers’ seminars offered by the Center for Dairy Excellence have been extremely informative on understanding market conditions, providing solutions to counter downturns, and determining the best strategy for our farm. Zach also visited our farm and met with me to explain the programs in depth. Learning the multiple programs available and determining your cost of production is critical information for making informed and strategic decisions to protect your farm’s financial health,” said Ginger Breon of Weaver Family Farm in Centre County, Pa.

“Zach’s ‘Protecting Your Profits’ resources provide a massive amount of global, domestic and regional dairy market information that demonstrate where the markets have been and help indicate which direction they are going. I could go to all of the individual data sources myself to accumulate all of that information, but Zach compresses the data into about a 15-minute presentation that’s easy to consume [each month],” said Michael John, Executive Vice President, Milk Marketing at Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association.

To learn more about the Center’s business consultants who are available to dairy farm families at no cost, contact Melissa Anderson at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org or call 717-346-0849 to be paired with a consultant.

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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.