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**Dairy**EXCELLENCE

## For Immediate Release

**Media Contact:** Emily Barge, 717-346-0849; [ebarge@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:ebarge@centerfordairyexcellence.org)

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### **PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING GRANTS AVAILABLE TO DAIRY FARMS**

*The Dairy Decisions Consultants Program Pairs Dairy Farms with Experienced Consultants*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – The Center for Dairy Excellence is now accepting applications for the Dairy Decisions Consultant (DDC) Grant Program for the 2020-21 year. The DDC Program provides dairy farm families with professional consulting resources to help make decisions that will shape the future of their operation. Once accepted into the program, farms can receive up to \$3,500 to work with a Dairy Decisions Consultant who has firsthand experience in the dairy industry. The application period opened in October 2020, and limited grants are available on a first come, first serve basis.

“The DDC program was a really successful opportunity, and that’s what has allowed us to have the support to seek some other funding and try to add a value-added portion to our farm,” said Jill Henry of Henry Farms of Knox, LLC in Clarion County, Pennsylvania. “Our consultant showed us where our farm would be if we continued into the future in the same status we are now. Then he showed us what it would look like if we received one grant or both grants, and what it would look like if we didn’t get funded and tried to outsource that funding through lenders. He gave us a lot of options and really helped us look at the whole picture.”

Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Center for Dairy Excellence offers a list of 17 Dairy Decisions Consultants with extensive expertise and a passion for dairy. Farms are paired with an experienced consultant who can help enhance business performance, reach financial benchmarks, and explore new business opportunities. Consultants can work with farms in one of three key areas:

- Business Performance and Reaching Financial Benchmarks
- New Business Opportunity Exploration
- Employee Relations & Development

“The DDC program is really designed to provide dairies with a ‘whole farm’ review of their operation and provide clear takeaways and recommendations for the future,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “We work closely to match farms with consultants who align with their farm’s vision and have the expertise to guide them in specific areas.”

If a farm already has a consultant in mind they would like to work with, that person can be named within the application for approval by the Center. Farms are eligible to receive the DDC grant once every three years.

“For my husband and father-in-law, the DDC program helped them see that change is a possibility for the future. They were feeling stuck and like they didn’t have options because the market was so bad,” Henry said. “To hear our consultant’s perspective and his projections, they learned what to eliminate that’s losing money and how they can come out on top. Now, we’re hopeful and excited for the future. This program gave us the courage to say *‘yes, we can keep going.’*”

For all grant programs offered by the Center, program participants must demonstrate industry and farm commitment by documenting in-kind and financial match contributions to the program reimbursements received. Farms must complete an application and submit the required \$100 application fee to participate in the Dairy Decisions Consultant grant program.

Limited grants are available for the 2020-21 year and are available on a first come, first serve basis. Once approved, farms can utilize the DDC grant to be reimbursed for any qualified expenses incurred from July 1, 2020 to May 30, 2021.

Visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/ddc](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/ddc) to apply online or download a printed application. Contact Melissa Anderson at 717-636-0779 or [via email](mailto:melissa@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).

**Center for Dairy Excellence ▼ 2301 North Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110 ▼ 717-346-0849 ▼  
[www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org)**