



For Immediate Release

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CENTER OFFERING 2018-19 TEAM GRANTS FOR DAIRY PRODUCERS

Team Utilization Leads to Better Decisions, Improved Performance

Harrisburg, Pa. – Dairy farms looking for outside expertise on making decisions in a challenging marketplace could benefit from grants now available through the Center for Dairy Excellence to establish an advisory team. Those with existing teams or those wanting to establish a team to work in an advisory role can receive reimbursements for paid team members and discovery-related costs.

“We were renting a 94-stall tie stall barn and just didn’t know what to do,” said Jessica Slaymaker, a participant in a dairy profit team from Bradford, Pa. “We had difficult questions to answer. Do we switch cows or sell them? Do we rent another barn? Do we chop our own corn silage? From there, we were advised to use a profit team to answer these questions. This has probably been one of the single best decisions in our business career.”

The Slaymakers have worked with a team since 2013. From 2015 on, the couple has been operating out of a free stall and parlor facility where they were able to expand their herd. Their profit team consists of a Penn State Extension agent, a banker and a nutritionist. The Slaymakers also utilize others for certain questions or topics of discussion. Now, they are working on building a manure system to improve their operations.

The Center offers grants to help farms establish a team of key advisors to provide insight into the business decision making process. Teams typically consist of the farm’s most trusted advisors, with a facilitator designated to coordinate meetings and work. Three types of teams are available to dairy farm families, with different grant levels for each:

- **Dairy Profit Teams:** Dairy farms with existing profit teams or that establish a new profit team to work in an advisory role for the farm can receive up to \$2,000 in reimbursements for paid team members and discovery-related costs. The Profit Team’s function is to serve as a board of advisors for the farm, addressing bottlenecks and identifying opportunities for greater profitability.
- **Dairy Transition Teams:** 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 \$3,000 in funding, which could cover the cost of paid team members, discovery-related costs and attorney expenses.



- **Dairy Transformation Teams:** This option allows producers considering a major business transformation to apply to receive up to \$5,000 to establish a team to help plan and work through that transformation. The grant may also include additional funding if the farm's plan involves a renewable energy component.

On-Farm Resource program guidelines emphasize increased profitability, improved performance, and a constructive transformation and/or transition plan. Program participants must also demonstrate industry and farm commitment to the program 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 advisory teams. The Center is currently accepting applications for On-Farm Resource Teams for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Once approved, farms can utilize the grant to be reimbursed for any qualified expenses incurred from July 1, 2018, to May 31, 2019.

"We have utilized our team to help us be successful for the future. They are the ones that helped us get into our new facility," Slaymaker said. "Without them, we would either be renting a barn still or no longer be in business."

The Center works with the Penn State Extension Dairy Team to offer greater resources to farms involved in team programs, including the Dairy Trend Analyzer Program. Both profit and transition teams have access to additional funding for business planning and environmental compliance, as well.

Visit the "Business Tools" tab on centerfordairyexcellence.org to get more information and access program applications. Or, contact Melissa Anderson at 717- 346-0849 or via email at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org.

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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.