



For Immediate Release

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DAIRY EXCELLENCE GRANTS TO OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS STARTING MARCH 1

The Grants Help Support Improvement Projects Related to Cow Comfort, Efficiency, and Milk Production Per Cow

Harrisburg, Pa. – The next round of funding for the Dairy Excellence Grant Program opens on March 1, and Pennsylvania dairy producers have until March 31 to submit a grant application. The program is ideal for Pennsylvania dairy producers who want to improve cow comfort, milk production per cow, or overall efficiency on their dairy farm. Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, this is a competitive grant program that offers up to a 50 percent, or up to a maximum matching level of \$5,000, to dairy farms approved into the program. Grant applications will only be accepted from March 1-31, 2022, with selections made and winning applicants notified by April 20.

“A lot of the Pennsylvania dairy producers we work with are focused on efficiency and fine-tuning their dairy operations. These grants allow us to support a wide range of improvement projects that are making a real difference in Pennsylvania dairy herds,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “This is a competitive grant with a limited window to apply, so make sure you submit your application by March 31.”

Improvement projects can include anything related to improving dairy farm efficiency, cow comfort, milking facilities, housing facilities, or feeding systems. The project should focus on improving milk production per cow and/or enhancing overall farm profitability and efficiency.

“The upgraded TMR mixer has made a better and more uniform mix for the cows than what we had in the past. Our components have actually jumped three tenths of a point. We’re an all Jersey herd, so components mean everything here. It’s more income, and it has made a big difference,” said Dillon Cotter of Glenview Farm in Somerset County, Pa., a previous grant recipient. “I’ve also noticed fresh cow health is a lot better because they’re getting a more uniform mix. It’s really making a difference on that end, too.”

The Center has awarded a total of \$525,000 to more than 100 Pennsylvania dairy producers between previous rounds of the grant program. A total of 26,000 Pennsylvania dairy cows have been impacted by these improvement projects, and herd sizes have ranged from approximately 50 cows to 2,000 cows. Dairy producers who received the grants during previous rounds have used the funds to upgrade feed bunks, install new crowd gates, invest in new mattresses, build new gating systems, and more.

“We are opening an on-farm creamery, so I’m working on reducing the herd size and bringing our breeding age heifers into the dairy barn. But I needed extra gates and headlocks. Right now, where we have them, I’m wasting a lot of my time trying to get one or two heifers bred. This grant helped pay for the gating and headlocks to bring the breeding age heifers in, condense the herd, and hopefully make everything much more efficient,” said Amy Brickner of Stover Farms in Cumberland County, Pa., a previous grant recipient. “When I heard about the grant, especially with the way prices for gates, metal, and even wood have increased over the last year, every dollar helps.”

Additional examples of applicable projects include fans, sprinklers or misters in free stall or tie stall barns; curtains or other ventilation improvements; mattresses or construction to move to deep bedded sand stalls; variable speed pulsation; and cow brush or foot bath installation.

To participate in the Dairy Excellence Grant program, dairy farms must complete an application. A \$100 application fee is required upon submission but will be reimbursed if the application is not accepted. Individuals must have a dairy farm to apply. As part of the application process, dairy producers will be required to:

- Know their cost of production
- Be compliant with the National FARM Program or a similar program
- Have a Conservation and Nutrient Management Plan in place
- List two consultants/advisors who work with their farm (nutritionist, accountant, veterinarian, etc.)
- Explain how the improvement will help their overall operation and aid in milk production per cow, efficiency and/or cow comfort

Grant recipients will be notified by April 20, 2022. Expenses/invoices must be submitted by June 30, 2022.

Dairy farm businesses or individuals receiving the Dairy Excellence Grant during the Fall 2021-22 fiscal year are not eligible to receive a Dairy Excellence Grant in this round. Those who applied for a Dairy Excellence Grant in 2021-2022 but were not accepted into the program are eligible to apply in this round.

To apply, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/dairy-excellence-grants to submit your application online or download a printed application to mail back. Applications will only be accepted from March 1-31, 2022. Contact Melissa Anderson at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org or 717-636-0779 for more information.

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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.

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