



For Immediate Release

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PRODUCERS RECOGNIZED AND WELCOMED TO SERVING ON CENTER BOARD *Center Retires Board Members; Bitler, Slaymaker and Zimmerman Welcomed to Term*

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Center for Dairy Excellence recently welcomed three new dairy producer board members to replace board members who were retiring from the board. The Center’s board is comprised of dairy producers and representatives from all aspects of the industry.

Retiring board members who have served a full six years on the board include:

Tim Kurtz, a dairy producer from Elverson, Berks Co., who served on the Center’s board from 2010 to 2016. He served the board as the first vice chairperson. His term vacancy has been filled by Phoebe Bitler, of Fleetwood, Berks Co., whom will represent the southeast region.

Jennifer Heltzel, a producer from Martinsburg, Blair Co., who served on the board from 2010 to 2016. She served the board as secretary. Her term vacancy has been filled by Caroline Zimmerman, of Martinsburg, Blair Co., whom will represent the central region.

Erick Coolidge, a producer and county commissioner from Wellsboro, Tioga Co., who served on the board from 2010 to 2016. He served in various leadership capacities, including the previous role as chairperson. His term vacancy has been filled by Jessica Slaymaker, of Mansfield, Tioga Co., whom will represent the northeast region.

“It’s important that dairy farmers take a role in directing the work of the Center for Dairy Excellence,” said Don Risser, board chairman and partner in Meadow Vista Farms, Bainbridge. “Serving as a board member provides an opportunity to ensure a viable, profitable business for Pennsylvania dairy farmers, today and in the future.”

The board is intended to represent a cross section of the dairy industry, with seats for six dairy farmers, two allied industry professionals, one marketing cooperative employee, one retail representative, one processor representative, one member from the Pennsylvania General Assembly, one representative each from the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association, Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, and the current Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture.

The Center is a non-profit organization which empowers the people, creates industry partnerships and coordinates the resources to grow dairy profitability in Pennsylvania. The 16-member board of directors is responsible for guiding the work of the Center and shaping its vision for Pennsylvania’s dairy industry.



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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.