

Dairy Decisions Consultant FAQs

1. *Why should our farm consider a Dairy Decisions Consultant (DDC)?*

You may be wondering where to start in addressing multiple concerns, and at this time you may not have a comfort level in working in a “team” setting. If this is your situation, the DDC program may be a good fit for your farm. A DDC will typically work with you to do a “whole farm” review of your dairy operation and provide recommendations for moving forward. It has been the Center’s experience that many farms begin with a DDC and then move into working with several trusted advisors in a more formal “team” setting.

2. *What are the types of consultations available?*

- a. **Employee Management & Communication** - Employee management is more than just ensuring that your employees are doing their job. It consists of procedures and strategies that can help you measure, monitor, and interact with the workforce that plays a huge role in your business.
- b. **Business Planning & Structure** - Business planning is a necessity to help manage volatility and create a roadmap for decision-making in all aspects of the business.
- c. **Product Marketing & Labeling** - Effective marketing and labeling of your branded dairy products can create a more positive impact on your customers and their purchasing decisions.
- d. **Direct Marketing** – Directly marketing products made from your milk to consumers can help a farm capture more revenues, but the processing and branded business can be complex.
- e. **Animal Welfare** – Veterinarian consultants will help farms establish animal welfare protocols related to the FARM Program as well as help train employees in FARM compliance.
- f. **Financial** - Financial management and planning can provide dairy farm families with professional consulting resources to help make decisions that will shape the future of their farm.
- g. **Pre-Farm Transition** – Business and financial feasibility for transitioning the farm and/or family issue projects to set the farm up for a transition team.

3. *Who serves as a DDC and where do I find the application?*

Easy access on the CDE website for both:

Consultants: <https://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/programs-resources/dairy-decisions-consultant-grants/>

Application: <https://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/ddc-application/>

4. *Must I use a DDC from the list on CDE’s website or may I use another person?*

No, if you have a trusted advisor that would serve your farm well as a DDC, please contact the Center. We will vet the advisor for approval and then submit a DDC application with the appropriate information. The consultant must be willing to commit to the requirements associated with the program to qualify to do the work, so we can ensure that your experience is both meaningful and helpful in your decision making process.

5. *How is the consultant paid?*

The consultant will send the bill and summary of work provided with responses of the farms three goals for the consultation being met to the Center and will be paid directly by us. If the consultant's bill is over the allotted DDC funds, the farmer will be responsible to pay the remaining balance. The center will pay the consultant up to \$4,000.00. **Funding should be used by June 30, 2024.**

6. *Is there an application fee?*

There is a **\$100 application fee** for this grant.

7. *Am I eligible to have a DDC and an On-Farm Resource Team in the same fiscal year?*

Yes, based on the recommendation of the consultant, you can apply for an On-Farm Resource Team, after the DDC has been completed.

8. *What can I expect from the DDC consultation and will I be asked to provide any feedback?*

Once you identify your goals or the questions you would like answered, it is the DDC's job to provide perspective on how you can accomplish those goals and/or to provide answers to your questions. They will do that by visiting your farm, talking with you, your partners, and your team, collecting your financial and production information, depending on which DDC option you have selected, and just observing the farm. Then they will build a report from their observations to provide the feedback you are requesting. Depending on your situation, they are likely to visit your farm a second time to review the report with you and answer any of your questions regarding their review. You will have the opportunity to complete a survey on the consultation after they have completed the DDC consultation to provide your perspective on whether the experience has met your expectations and if they have provided a plan or options for your next steps for your operation.