



For Immediate Release

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SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2026 DAIRY FINANCIAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Sessions Will Focus On Non-Traditional Dairy Partnerships, Evolving Dairy Economics and More

Harrisburg, Pa. – Registration is now open for the 17th annual Dairy Financial and Risk Management Conference, titled “Rewriting the Future.” Designed to help attendees guide their dairy clients through financial planning, risk management, and family dynamics, the conference is planned for Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at the PA Farm Show Complex (McClay Street Entrance) in Harrisburg, Pa. Dairy financial consultants, lending representatives, and interested dairy producers can register online at www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/financial-conference.

The conference will feature expert speakers who will lead four sessions during the one-day event:

- **The Evolving Economics of Dairy Markets with Corey Geiger.** Dairy is having its moment as dairy demand stands at an all-time high. As this takes place, dairy protein demand is having an unprecedented run. However, with more protein comes more butterfat, which means the industry will need to look for more markets. At the same time, near-record beef prices are reshaping dairy cow inventories across the nation. Cull cow and calf sales represent nearly 20 percent of dairy farm revenue. Dairy markets require us to constantly be rewriting, reshaping and reevaluating our numbers and the metrics that matter most to dairy farms. During this session, CoBank’s Corey Geiger will walk through these evolving economics and how to keep up with such an ever-changing landscape.
- **Their Story, Their Strategy: Dairy Farms Built Beyond the Family Tree – Dairy Producer Panel with Austin Copenhaver, Lyndon Miller and Lisa Graybeal.** During this panel discussion, hear from three dairy producers who have taken the path less traveled and built non-traditional partnerships for their operations. These producers have pursued partnerships with someone outside of their immediate family to rewrite their future and help propel their dairy forward. You’ll hear their farms’ stories, strategies, and future plans as well as the nuts and bolts of how they got it to work for them. Facilitated by Dr. Brian Reed, this panel will feature a Q&A segment as well.
- **Risk, Returns & Resilience: Dairy Risk Management Insight for Financial Professionals with Andy McCarty.** Milk prices, feed costs, and margins can all change quickly, leaving many dairy producers asking some complex questions. Which tools should they utilize? When should they pull the trigger? How much coverage is enough? During this session, Andy McCarty will break down key risk management options, including DMC, DRP, LGM-Dairy, LRP, forward contracts, futures, options, and feed hedging. He will show how each option can help protect dairy producers’ margins, support cash flow, and align with a farm’s production, costs, and financial goals. This session is designed to educate financial professionals who work with dairy farms on various risk management tools.

- **Beyond the Numbers: Facilitating Conversations That Matter with Mike McGrann.**

When creating transition, financial, or business plans with dairy farm families, facilitating those discussions can feel like a balancing act. There are often emotions, points of tension, and unresolved conflicts that dairy farm families need to navigate. During this session, Mike McGrann will share how lenders and financial consultants can tackle tough conversations and dynamics surrounding the financial planning process. Learn how to clear the path for productive family business transitions for your clients – and help families rewrite their farm’s legacy.

“For Pennsylvania dairy farmers, and the ag lenders and consultants who work with them, it often feels like we’re navigating the impossible. From tight margins to family dynamics, being successful and profitable in the dairy industry often starts with rewriting the future and reimagining what our dairy farms’ legacies looks like,” said Valerie Mason-Faith, Risk Education Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “Our speakers will share ways you can clear the path for productive family business transitions for your clients — and drill down on risk management and evolving dairy markets.”

The conference will be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on September 9. The cost to attend this year’s Dairy Financial and Risk Management Conference is \$260 per person, discounted to \$210 for those who are representatives of the Center for Dairy Excellence Allies for Advancement.

Learn more about each speaker:

- **Corey Geiger** is an internationally recognized expert in dairy economics and agricultural markets. His analysis and commentary are sought by major media outlets including *The Wall Street Journal*, *NBC News*, *Politico*, *Bloomberg*, *The Atlantic*, and leading agricultural publications across the country. Corey currently serves as Lead Dairy Economist at CoBank, where he contributes influential research through the Knowledge Exchange Division. His work helps industry leaders, policymakers, and producers navigate evolving market dynamics across the dairy and animal protein sectors.
- **Austin Copenhaver** resides in the Finger Lakes region of New York with wife and three kids, where he is a partner in two dairy farm operations totaling 1,700 milking cows. Originally from Annville, PA, Austin attended SUNY Morrisville College and Cornell University. In 2013, Austin, along with partners Garrett Eiholzer and Clayton Wood, started Ivy Lakes Dairy from a pre-existing dairy of the Hathorn Family in Stanley, NY starting with 400 milk cows. Since that time, the partners have expanded Ivy Lakes Dairy to 1,100 milking cows. Copenhaver also became a partner in neighboring Gorham Dairy along with Jeff Dann in 2019, milking 600 cows.
- **Lyndon Miller**, his wife Louise and their four children live in Smithsburg, Maryland. Lyndon is in a partnership with Joel Strite at Skyline Dairy LLC. Skyline started in 2022 in a new robotic operation, milking 350 cows and raising all replacement heifers on the farm. He is herdsman and manager of the dairy on a day-to-day basis.
- **Lisa Graybeal** grew up in southern Lancaster County on her family’s dairy farm and graduated from Northeastern University in Boston with a bachelor’s degree in journalism. She and her brother are the third generation on their farm, and they merged with another family two years ago to form PennMar Dairy, with three locations in

Pennsylvania and Maryland milking 3,500 cows. In March 2023, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding appointed Graybeal to Deputy Secretary. She can still be found working on her dairy farm every weekend and when needed.

- **Brian Reed DVM, MBA** spent 37 years working with dairy farmers as a veterinarian. After receiving his MBA degree in 2001, he combined his veterinary work with business management consulting activities focusing on assisting dairy farm families with strategic planning, profitability analysis, and farm transition planning. Dr. Reed currently focuses on using Center for Dairy Excellence resources and grants, as well as serving as an independent consultant, to assist farm families going through farm transition and transformation planning.
- **Andy McCarty** serves as a Dairy Business Advisor for Land O'Lakes, Inc. for member-owners in the Mid-Atlantic region, providing a full suite of risk management services for their operations. Andy is a licensed Dairy Revenue Protection Insurance Agent and provides cost of production analysis, milk production and expense budget development, milk marketing plan development, and provides timely market updates. With over 18 years in the agriculture industry, Andy has a wide range of expertise in risk management. He is not afraid to roll up his sleeves and help any producer find common-sense solutions through different tools available that can have lasting impacts and benefits.
- **Mike McGrann** is a Managing Director in the BBH Center for Family Business. In this role, he helps private business owners navigate issues at the intersection of family and business and is a trusted thought partner to owners as they manage complex issues around succession, growth, and legacy preservation. Prior to joining the firm, Mike spent over 25 years working with complex multigenerational family enterprises, families of wealth, and family offices around the world providing consulting services and educational programming.

For more information about the program and to register for the event, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/financial-conference or call Valerie Mason-Faith at 717-346-0849.

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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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