



For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Emily Barge, 717-346-0849; ebarge@centerfordairyexcellence.org

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BUSINESS CONSULTANTS AVAILABLE TO HELP DAIRY FARM FAMILIES ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

The Center Offers One-on-One Consulting Support at No Charge to Dairy Farm Families

Harrisburg, Pa. – To help Pennsylvania dairy farm families with transition planning, business management consulting, and risk management planning, the Center for Dairy Excellence has several consultants available to work with Pennsylvania dairy farm families. Dr. Brian Reed and Dr. Charlie Gardner both serve as consultants provided by the Center to help dairy farm families navigate the complex process of transition planning, business plan development, and business transformation through one-on-one consulting and support.

With years of experience in the dairy industry, the Center taps the knowledge and expertise of these consultants and offers their services at no charge to dairy farm families across the state. The farm families who have utilized one-on-one consulting through the Center have focused on:

- **Transitioning ownership and developing succession plans:**

“It was very valuable having a summary after the meetings about what was discussed, so both of us [family members] could look at it. I appreciated those action items. Dr. Gardner wasn’t afraid to tell us when it was time to get some of those actions accomplished, too. Overall, we feel good. Without the grant, we wouldn’t be where we are. Some of us didn’t want to talk about [the transition] or face reality, but the meetings made us stop and talk about it. It would be hard to spend that money upfront for an advisor without the grant. But I wouldn’t do it without a third-party consultant walking alongside us. It’s so valuable.”

–Kerry Zeiset, a dairy producer from Lancaster County, Pa.

- **Navigating family farm dynamics:**

“My husband and I have two sons who are both married. We also have a daughter and her husband. Dr. Reed talked to each of us individually as couples. He heard where we were at, what our thoughts and concerns were, and then brought us together as a group. When you work with each other day in and day out, sometimes you don’t always hear things like someone else does. He just had a different perspective on listening to

what we all had to say and then presenting it back to us. It was helpful. Dr. Reed encouraged us to take it slow and gave us real insight on how to keep things moving forward and some thoughts on which direction to go.”

–Betsy Yoder of Heron Run Farms in Huntingdon County, Pa.

- **Developing business and transformation plans:**

“About five years ago, I started on a journey to open my own dairy store. Dr. Charlie Gardner helped me write my business plan and has been an exceptional resource to ask questions, get advice, and get other contacts in Pennsylvania who have been working on similar projects.”

–Amy Brickner of Destiny Dairy Bar at Stover Farms in Cumberland County, Pa.

- **Strategizing and evaluating farm viability:**

“The Center for Dairy Excellence recommended Dr. Brian Reed. We were looking for some guidance on how to transfer the farm property to the next generation. He's seen good and bad transfers, which gives him insight into our situation. We spent the majority of our time looking into the viability of the farm operation. Our goal right now is figuring out how to increase and diversify our income streams. The Center for Dairy Excellence and Dr. Reed helped us better understand our strengths and weaknesses. We haven't acted on any of the ideas yet, but we're getting closer.”

–Breckbill Acres of Lebanon County, Pa.

To learn more about the Center’s business consultants who are available to dairy farm families at no cost, contact Melissa Anderson at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org or call 717-346-0849 to be paired with a consultant.

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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.