



CENTER FOR
DairyEXCELLENCE

For Immediate Release

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THREE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES NOW OPEN FOR PA DAIRY PRODUCERS AND PROCESSORS

The Grants Help Support Improvement Projects, Value-Added Consulting, and Processing Expansions

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Center for Dairy Excellence opened three competitive grant programs on September 1, 2022 for Pennsylvania dairy producers and processors who are looking to advance their businesses. Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, the programs include Dairy Excellence Grants, Technical Assistance Grants and Dairy Processing Grants. All three programs have limited windows to apply.

“Whether you want to build a new calving barn, enhance cow comfort with a new bedding system, make a processing expansion, or pursue a new opportunity in the value-added space, these grant opportunities can make an immediate impact on your dairy business and help you bring these dreams to life,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence.

The **Dairy Excellence Grant program** is ideal for Pennsylvania dairy producers who want to improve cow comfort, milk production per cow, or overall efficiency on their dairy farm. 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 September 1-30, 2022, with selections made and winning applicants notified by October 20.

“Our goals were to increase milk production and longevity [with the grant]. The new fans alone paid for themselves in two months’ time last summer. In other years where we had heat waves, we could lose 10-12 pounds per cow. We hardly lost any pounds with the fans. It was amazing. I knew these improvements would have an impact, but it blew my mind just how they far they really went. Cow comfort really makes a difference,” said Justin Gochnour of JUS-DEN Farm, a previous Dairy Excellence Grant recipient.

Improvement projects can include anything related to improving milk production per cow and/or enhancing overall farm profitability and efficiency. 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; cow brush or foot bath installation; and enhanced feed systems for approved projects.

The **Technical Assistance Grant program** is designed for dairy farms and small-scale dairy businesses who want to build their brand, improve consumer access to locally-produced foods, and work with a consultant in the value-added and direct marketing space. Dairy farms and small-scale dairy businesses in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey are eligible to apply. Up to

15 grants will be awarded, and if all 15 grants are utilized, each grant will be for \$5,000. Funds will be redistributed if there are fewer than 15 grants awarded. Grant applications will only be accepted from September 1 through October 15, 2022.

“We believe in connections and talking to people. That’s how we found the Center for Dairy Excellence. Consulting is the same way. If you go into it with an open mind to learn from them, it can be really great,” said Hayley Painter of The Painterland Sisters, who worked with a consultant to develop their own yogurt brand and value-added product. “I encourage other farmers, if you want to create a value-added product, you can do it small on your farm and use a consultant to create your website or the financial plan, for example. You don’t have to learn how to do it all.”

The Technical Assistance grants provide financial assistance to help dairy farms access the private consulting resources they need to build their brand and to help cultivate our regional food economy, strengthen regional dairy food processing capacity, and create and improve economic opportunities for individual dairy producers and food businesses. The grant is made possible by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, which is a USDA initiative, and through the Ag Excellence line within the Commonwealth of PA budget.

The **Dairy Processing Grant program** is designed for Pennsylvania-based dairy processors who are currently receiving milk from two or more Pennsylvania dairy farms and want to make a processing expansion, improvement or innovation. Grant funding will be a 50 percent match, up to a maximum limit matching level of \$10,000. Grant applications will only be accepted from September 1 through November 1, 2022.

Qualifying expenses include anything related to the design, planning and implementation of a project that would expand the processing plant’s ability to offer additional products made from milk and/or expand into new markets for PA dairy. The project should focus on expansion, improvements, or innovations within the plant itself.

To participate in each of the three grant programs, dairy farms or businesses must complete an application. A \$100 application fee is required upon submission but will be reimbursed if the application is not accepted.

To learn more about each grant opportunity and to apply online, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org and click on the “Programs and Resources” section. Email Melissa Anderson at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org or call 717-636-0779 with questions.

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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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