



For Immediate Release

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

August 3, 2026

THREE DAIRY PRODUCERS TO SHARE HOW THEY FORMED NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AT DAY-LONG CONFERENCE ON SEPT. 9

The Dairy Financial & Risk Management Conference Will Feature a Producer Panel

Harrisburg, Pa. – At the 2026 Dairy Financial and Risk Management Conference on September 9 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Austin Copenhaver (Ivy Lakes Dairy and Gorham Dairy), Lyndon Miller (Skyline Dairy LLC) and Lisa Graybeal (PennMar Dairy) will each share their unique story about how have pursued partnerships with someone outside of their immediate family to rewrite their futures. They will be part of a producer panel discussion facilitated by Dr. Brian Reed, an independent consultant who assists farm families with business transition and transformation planning. Titled “Rewriting the Future,” the day-long conference includes additional speakers who will challenge ag lenders and consultants to help their dairy clients reimagine what their legacies look like, share how to navigate difficult family business conversations and dynamics, and drill down on what lenders need to know about dairy markets and risk management.

The conference is planned for Wednesday, September 9, 2026 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the PA Farm Show Complex (McClay Street Entrance) in Harrisburg, Pa. Discounts are available for dairy producers. Dairy financial consultants, lending representatives, and interested dairy producers can register online at www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/financial-conference.

“We’re looking forward to hearing from these three dairy producers who have taken the path less traveled and built non-traditional partnerships for their operations. You’ll hear their farms’ stories, strategies, and future plans as well as the nuts and bolts of how they got these unique partnerships to work for them,” said Valerie Mason-Faith, Risk Education Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “Whether you’re guiding your dairy clients or managing a dairy farm yourself, this year’s conference is filled with sessions like this to help you rewrite the future. We hope to see you there.”

Austin Copenhaver resides in the Finger Lakes region of New York with his 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.

To view the full program and register for the conference on September 9, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/financial-conference or call Valerie Mason-Faith at 717-346-0849.

###

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.

Center for Dairy Excellence ▼ 2301 North Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110 ▼ 717-346-0849 ▼

www.centerfordairyexcellence.org