



For Immediate Release

Media Contacts:

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

Kelly Kundratic; 717-233-1375; kelly@teampa.com

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PENNSYLVANIA DAIRY FUTURE COMMISSION RELEASES FINAL REPORT

Issues of Concern and Action Items Offer Roadmap for Sustainable and Vibrant Dairy Industry

Harrisburg, Pa. – Through a global pandemic with unprecedented challenges for an industry deemed essential, the Pennsylvania Dairy Future Commission has completed its mission to review and make recommendations to promote and strengthen the commonwealth's dairy industry. The Commission's recommendations were released to leaders in the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the dairy industry today in the form of action items that can be championed and implemented over the next few years.

"We have been talking for years about what is really needed to help our industry thrive, and we want this report to be used as an action plan rather than just being yet another report that sits on a shelf without substantial implementation," said Commission Chair Brett Reinford of Reinford Farms in Juniata County.

The Dairy Future Commission was established with the passage of Act 66 during the 2019-2020 Regular Session of the Pennsylvania Legislature, as part of a larger package of initiatives to help the dairy industry regain its footing in the global market. Signed into law in July 2019, the Act designated the membership of 24 individuals to serve on the Commission and allocated one year to submit its findings to the Governor and Legislature.

"I have been so impressed with the time these Commission members committed to this effort," Reinford added. "Everyone has been fully engaged and genuinely concerned about providing substantive ideas to help advance the dairy industry. We never missed a beat, even when the stay-at-home order prevented us from meeting in person, and here we are ten months after our first meeting with nearly 60 recommendations."

The Commission organized itself in four subcommittees, each of which was chaired by a dairy producer:

- Farm-Level chaired by Doug Harbach, Schrack Family Farm, Clinton County;
- State-Level chaired by Glenn Stoltzfus, Penwood Farms, Somerset County;
- Market-Level chaired by Dina Zug, Zugstead Farm, Juniata County; and
- Consumer-Level chaired by Carissa Itle-Westrick, Vale Wood Farms, Cambria County

Recommendations from individuals, organizations, and studies of the industry were carefully considered within each subcommittee before going through more scrutiny and deliberation from the full Commission.

“In our report, it was important to us to clearly describe the fair and democratic process the Commission undertook to review and deliberate issues of concern and formulate recommendations,” said Reinford. “Dairy producers can be confident their concerns were heard loud and clear, first and foremost in our deliberations.”

The Commission hopes there will be at least a few action items that each individual or coalition within the dairy industry and government chooses to champion and see through to implementation. Rather than prioritizing or weighting action items, the Commission chose to organize its recommendations by estimated timeframes it believes are practical targets for implementation, not to exceed five years.

“I think implementing all of these issues is vitally important,” offered Reinford. “But we know that there is low-hanging fruit, that may even be underway at this moment, and there are some things that may take changes in laws or regulations, which we know can sometimes take years to accomplish.”

The intent for the recommendations to be used as action items also prompted the Commission to seek a mechanism that will help track progress. The Center for Dairy Excellence will host and maintain a dashboard on their website so progress on implementation can be monitored, documented, and celebrated. “The Commission was only empaneled for one year,” noted Reinford. “But I think the whole industry shares our interest in following the progress on these recommendations in the next few years.”

The report and dashboard can be viewed on the Center for Dairy Excellence website at:

www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/pa-dairy-future-commission-recommendations

Comments and questions on the recommendations and report contents can be submitted by email to RA-AgDairyFuture@pa.gov.

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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.

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