



CENTER FOR
DairyEXCELLENCE

For Immediate Release

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

September 13, 2021

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO HELP DAIRY FARMERS IMPROVE PROFITABILITY, MAKE BUSINESS TRANSFORMATIONS, AND CREATE SUCCESSION PLANS

Three Types of Grants Are Available Through the Center's On-Farm Resource Program

Harrisburg, Pa. – Dairy producers who are looking to improve profitability, create a transition plan, or plan a major business transformation are encouraged to apply for one of three team grant opportunities now available through the Center for Dairy Excellence's On-Farm Resource Program. The 2021-22 team grants allow dairy producers to establish on-farm teams and take advantage of professional consulting resources to make strategic decisions at the farm level. The application period opened on September 1, and limited grants are available on a first come, first serve basis.

"The Transformation Team grant took the risk out of the feasibility. There's such a huge investment to see if it's even possible before you draw up plans or think about barn design," said Donny Bartch of Merrimart Farms in Perry County, Pennsylvania. "For me, being able to work backwards was more helpful than doing all the design work first and talking financials after. I would rather see the scope that we can do and then make our future fit into that scope."

The Center for Dairy Excellence offers three types of team grants: Dairy Profit Team, Dairy Transition Team, and Dairy Transformation Team. Each team consists of industry experts and trusted advisors, and the Center leverages funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to provide these grants to individual farms.

"Dairy producers often use these grants to identify bottlenecks that are hurting profitability or analyze different factors that are involved in a transformation project to determine if it's a good fit for their operation," said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. "By working with a team of advisors who have vast experience in different sectors of the dairy industry, producers can feel confident in the decisions they're making to enhance their operations."

Hear from dairy farmers who have used the program, and learn more about each type of team grant:

- **Dairy Profit Teams:** The Profit Team’s function is to serve as a group of advisors for the farm, addressing challenges and identifying opportunities for greater profitability. Dairy farms can receive **up to \$1,500** in reimbursements for paid team members and discovery-related costs.

“The team program really helped us when we got into the planning and details. When we had everyone, including our veterinarian and bank, around the table, we actually changed some of our initial ideas because of the discussion we had with the team. It was exciting to hear from different people who were going to help us in the future describe where they thought we should go. It was very helpful.”

–Reid Hoover, Brook-Corner Holsteins, Lebanon County, Pa.

- **Dairy Transition Teams:** This team is designed to help farms develop a transition or succession plan. The grant covers **up to \$3,500** of the cost of paid team members, discovery-related costs and attorney expenses.

“We’ve been trying to do [transition planning] on our own and nothing was happening. We’ve been talking about transitioning to an LLC and we’ve been talking about the next generation, but everyone is always so busy. It’s always on the back burner. Finally, we just needed some direction. The Center for Dairy Excellence really provided that.”

–Joanne Stoltzfus, Pennwood Farms, Somerset County, Pa.

- **Dairy Transformation Teams:** This option allows producers to establish a team to help plan and execute a major business transformation. Farms can receive **up to \$3,500** to establish a team to help plan and work through their transformation. Manure storage facility improvements do not qualify as eligible Transformation Team projects.

“We worked with a consultant and leveraged the Transformation Team grant to help us pay for that consulting time. He came in and sat down with us to put together a plan for what a cheese business plan would look like from a creamery point of view. We analyzed what the physical plant would need to look like, the cost of the items in the physical plant, the types of products we could produce, and what we should expect for labor costs.”

–Jason Frye, Pleasant Lane Farms, Westmoreland County, Pa.

On-farm teams consist of the farm’s most trusted advisors, with a facilitator designated to coordinate meetings and workflow. Farms with existing teams or those who want to establish a team to work in an advisory role can receive reimbursements for paid team members and discovery-related costs.

Limited grants are available for the 2021-22 year and are available on a first come, first serve basis. Farms must complete an application and submit the required \$100 application fee to participate in the advisory teams. Once approved, farms can utilize the grant to be reimbursed for any qualified expenses incurred from July 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022.

Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/grants to apply online or download a printed application. Contact Melissa Anderson at 717-636-0779 or manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org with questions.

###

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**