



CENTER FOR
DairyEXCELLENCE

For Immediate Release

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PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING GRANTS AVAILABLE TO DAIRY FARMS FOR SIX KEY AREAS

The Dairy Decisions Consultants Program Pairs Dairy Farms with Experienced Consultants Who Have Expertise in Six Different Areas

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Center for Dairy Excellence is now accepting applications for the Dairy Decisions Consultant (DDC) Grant Program for the 2021-22 year. The DDC Program provides dairy farm families with professional consulting resources to help make decisions that will shape the future of their operation in one of six strategic areas. Once accepted into the program, farms can receive up to \$3,500 to work with a Dairy Decisions Consultant who has firsthand experience in the dairy industry. The application period opened in September 2021, and limited grants are available on a first come, first serve basis.

“We had several opportunities in front of us that ranged from real estate purchase and diversification to expansion or remodel. We had a lot on the table at one time, so we were just trying to find a way to proceed and figure out our best options,” said Ron Wenger of Hollowacres Farm LLC in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. “Having the DDC program pay for a consultant to really dig into the financial details and various options was very beneficial. The program helped us by taking the extra time to flesh out all the different positives and negatives of each option.”

Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Center for Dairy Excellence offers a list of 20 Dairy Decisions Consultants with extensive expertise in different business sectors. Farms are paired with a consultant who can help enhance business performance, reach financial benchmarks, and explore new opportunities. New for this year’s program, consultants can work with farms in one of six key areas:

- **Employee Management & Communication** – Employee management is more than just ensuring that your employees are doing their job. It consists of procedures and strategies that can help you measure, monitor, and interact with the workforce that plays a huge role in your business.

- **Business Planning & Structure** – Business planning is a necessity to help manage volatility and create a roadmap for decision-making in all aspects of the business.
- **Product Marketing & Labeling** – Effective marketing and labeling of your branded dairy products can create a positive impact on your customers and their purchasing decisions.
- **Direct Marketing** – Directly marketing products made from your milk to consumers can help a farm capture more revenues, but the processing and branding strategies can be complex.
- **Animal Welfare** – Veterinarian consultants will help farms establish animal welfare protocols related to the FARM Program as well as help train employees in FARM compliance.
- **Financial Management** – Financial management and planning can provide dairy farm families with professional consulting resources to help make decisions that will shape the future of their farm.

“The DDC program has been known to help dairy producers shape the future of their farms, and this year we are welcoming consultants from additional sectors of business to the program,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “From direct marketing and animal welfare to employee management and business planning, we want producers to gain clear takeaways and strategies for moving their dairy operations forward.”

If a farm already has a consultant in mind they would like to work with, that person can be named within the application for approval by the Center. Farms are eligible to receive the DDC grant once every three years.

“Just because you have an idea in your head doesn’t mean it financially makes sense. Anytime you change one thing on the farm, there are a lot of other aspects to change along with it. You have to think through things like the labor and the taxes,” Wenger said. “For us, [the DDC program] really gave us time to think about all those other aspects. It helped us make sure we were thinking through the whole process, not just shooting from the hip.”

Farms must complete an application and submit the required \$100 application fee to participate in the Dairy Decisions Consultant grant program. Limited grants are available for the 2021-22 year and are available on a first come, first serve basis. Once approved, farms can utilize the DDC grant to be reimbursed for any qualified expenses incurred from July 1, 2021 to May 30, 2022.

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