



## For Immediate Release

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### **SECOND ROUND OF DAIRY EXCELLENCE GRANT FUNDING NOW OPEN FOR DAIRY PRODUCERS**

*The Grants Help Support Improvement Projects Related to Cow Comfort, Efficiency, and Milk Production Per Cow*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – The second round of funding for the Dairy Excellence Grant Program is now open, and dairy producers have until October 15 to submit a grant application. The program is ideal for Pennsylvania dairy producers who want to improve cow comfort, milk production per cow, or overall efficiency on their dairy farm. Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 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 to October 15, 2021, with selections made and winning applicants notified by November 20.

“We’ve had so many dairy producers apply to this program with the goal of improving efficiency and cow comfort on their operations. Thanks to additional funding, we are able to support more improvement projects that are making a real difference in Pennsylvania dairy herds,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center. “This is a competitive grant with a limited window to apply, so make sure you submit your application by October 15.”

Improvement projects can include anything related to improving dairy farm efficiency, cow comfort, milking facilities, housing facilities, or feeding systems. The project should focus on improving milk production per cow and/or enhancing overall farm profitability and efficiency.

During the first round of funding, the Center awarded \$400,000 to 80 dairy producers throughout the state. A total of 18,925 Pennsylvania dairy cows were impacted by these improvement projects, and herd sizes ranged from approximately 50 cows to 2,000 cows. Dairy producers who received the grants have used the funds to:

- **Upgrade feed bunks.** “I must express my gratitude for presenting this motivation to improve comfort and profit in a very needed and practical way. One of our major upgrades has been to our feed bunk and feeding system. It involves removing an overly limiting portable poly bunk and putting in a distribution system over a bunk my father

had constructed in the late 1970s that was under roof to enable more space for the cows to eat. Being a farmer means I am independent minded, but always willing to find a better way. This grant is helping accomplish this project." –William Haughwout, Willows Farm, Mifflin County

- **Install new crowd gates.** "If it's available and you qualify for it, go for it. Times are tough these days, and every little bit helps. The crowd gate was \$12,000 but \$5,000 helped a lot. It makes a difference." –Adam Derr, Faywest Holsteins, Fayette County
- **Invest in new mattresses.** "Replacing our mattresses is something we have wanted to do for some time. As comfort goes up, hopefully milk pounds will also! This grant is a boost that is much appreciated." –Rachel Casner, Casstead Farms, Mifflin County

Additional 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; and cow brush or foot bath installation.

To participate in the Dairy Excellence Grant program, dairy farms must complete an application. A \$100 application fee is required upon submission but will be reimbursed if the application is not accepted. As part of the application process, dairy producers will be required to:

- Know their cost of production
- Be compliant with the National FARM Program or a similar program
- Have a Conservation and Nutrient Management Plan in place
- List two consultants/advisors who work with their farm (nutritionist, accountant, veterinarian, etc.)
- Explain how the improvement will help their overall operation and aid in milk production per cow, efficiency and/or cow comfort

Grant recipients will be notified by November 20, 2021. Expenses/invoices must be submitted by March 15, 2022.

Dairy farm businesses or individuals receiving the Dairy Excellence Grant during the 2020-2021 fiscal year are not eligible to receive a Dairy Excellence Grant in this round. Those that applied for a Dairy Excellence Grant in 2020-2021 but were not accepted into the program are eligible to apply in this round.

To apply, visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/dairy-excellence-grants](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/dairy-excellence-grants) to submit your application online or download a printed application to mail back. Applications will only be accepted from September 1 through October 15, 2021. Contact Melissa Anderson at [manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org) or 717-636-0779 for more information.

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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](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org).

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