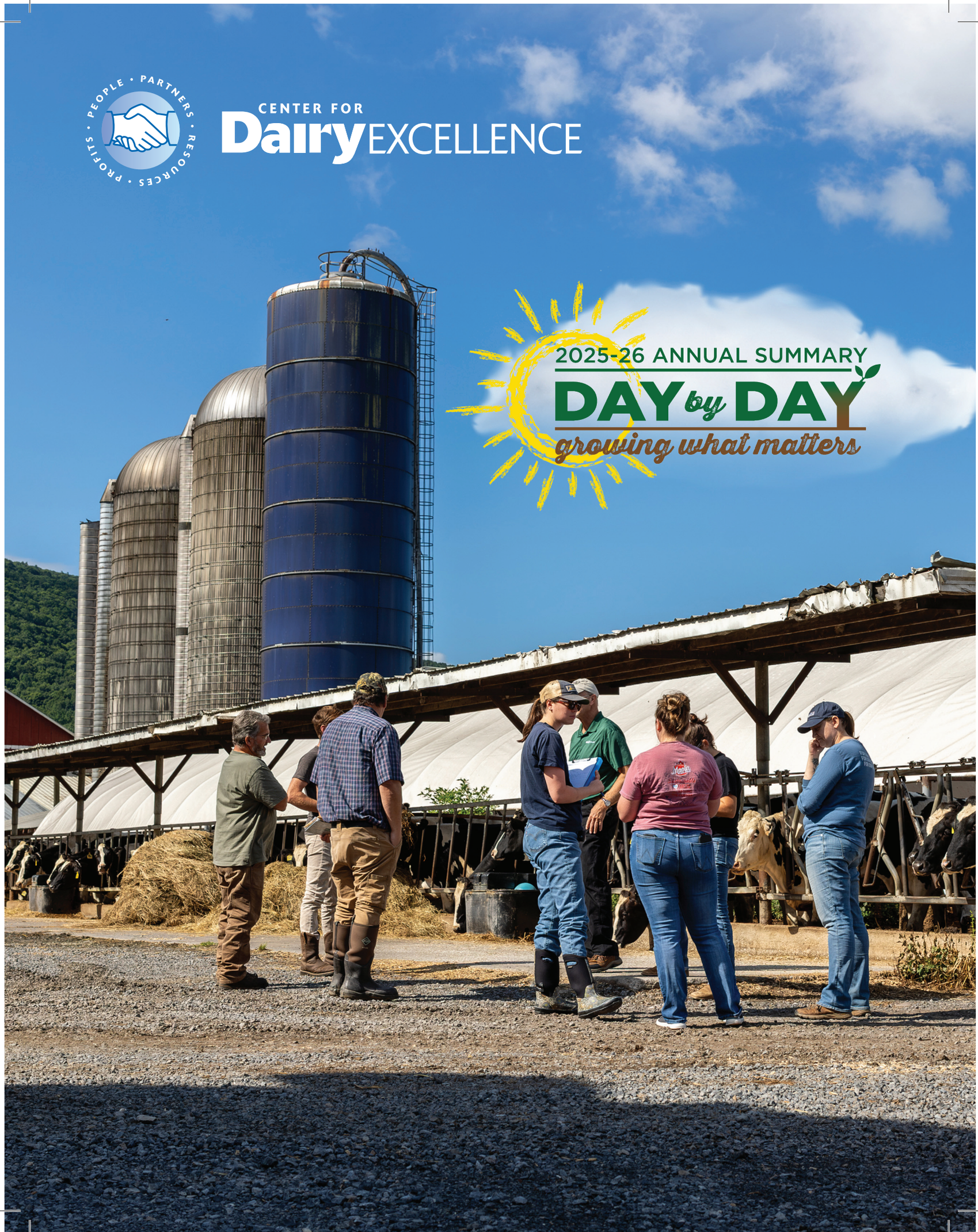
CENTER FOR
Dairy EXCELLENCE

PEOPLE • PARTNERS • RESOURCES • PROFITS

2025-26 ANNUAL SUMMARY

DAY by DAY

growing what matters



A Single Day Makes Us a Little Larger or Smaller



"Each new day represents a new moment and a chance to start again, to get a little better, become a little stronger, and to take another step forward toward a brighter tomorrow. At the Center for Dairy Excellence, we show up every day, singularly focused on helping dairy farm families and businesses to thrive. How we do that shows up in a lot of different ways. We serve as a catalyst to fill the void, inspire innovation, and encourage a management mindset in our dairy farm families. We spark the stories and the connections to forge a step here and a step there toward growing what matters for dairy in Pennsylvania, day by day." **– Jayne Sebright, Executive Director**

"A single day makes a difference on dairy farms, and the little details add up. Day by day, dairy farms take consistent, repeated actions to achieve their definition of growth. Whether it's bringing in the next generation and finding a way to make the business viable for years to come, working with a consultant to fine-tune herd health and boost the dairy's bottom line, or investing in a transformation project that's going to improve production and profitability, growth – and success – look different for every dairy farm family. The Center for Dairy Excellence offers funding, resources and connections as dairy producers pursue their individual goals. Day by day, the Center's team works collaboratively across the industry to form partnerships and spur innovation, creativity, and progress for Pennsylvania dairy."
– Katie Sattazahn, Chair of the Board of Directors





Filling the Void

See how we're tailoring our apprenticeship program and adapting our resources to meet farmers' needs. (Page 3)



Growing What Matters

Watch how farmers like Kerry and Lonnie are utilizing an outside perspective to achieve their unique goals. (Page 4)



Inspiring Innovation

Check out how grants, events, podcasts, and our new "farmer-made ingenuity" contest sparked innovation. (Page 5)



Boosting Management Mindset

Learn how real-time markets & management updates, industry scorecards, and workshops are giving farms an edge with business planning. (Page 6)

Sparking Stories & Connection

See how we're helping farmers like Carolyn build meaningful connections with their community. (Page 7)

Our Vision:

Serve as a catalyst for a vibrant Pennsylvania dairy industry.

Our Mission:

Empower and support Pennsylvania dairy families and businesses to thrive.

Our Values:

Adaptability • Collaboration • Leadership • Legacy • Stewardship

Filling the Void

As new issues continue to arise, the Center constantly adapts our resources to match farmers' everyday needs to care for their animals, their people, and their farms. From farm safety signs and animal care record-keeping books to biosecurity kits, we helped thousands of dairy producers in the past year rise to meet these new challenges that emerge. We also joined industry partners to host the Animal Agricultural Industry Breakfast to better equip producers to manage their risks.



"The support for both animal care and biosecurity really helps our farms to be successful, to be sustainable, and to really ensure they have a place in the broader national dairy industry," said Janae Klingler, Director of Animal Care and Sustainability with Maola Local Dairies.

"I like the record-keeping book because it's easy to use. It helps me put the numbers in black and white, and that's better than my memory," shared David Peachey, a PA dairy producer.

Finding and retaining a strong workforce can be another challenge for producers. The Center's Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship helps develop and motivate employees who have potential – giving them hands-on, herd management experience without having to go to college. To build on this, the Center registered a Robotic Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship Program this past year and regularly shares dairy job opportunities through a hub on our website and social channels.

"Through this apprenticeship, I learned a whole set of new skills that I don't think I would have gotten if I would have went to college. I worked with so many industry professionals, including agronomists, nutritionists, seed salesmen, and veterinarians. That was the most exciting thing – seeing all the different avenues and how [dairying] is a team effort," shared Rylee Fuller who completed an apprenticeship on a PA dairy farm.



Scan to hear from Janae



FARM-LEVEL RESOURCES & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

7,873 FARM **record-keeping books** distributed to date
3,143 **biosecurity kits** and signs sent to dairy producers to date
188 **farm safety signs** sent to farms
150 individuals attended the **Animal Agricultural Industry Breakfast**
3 dairy herd manager **apprentices** working on PA dairy farms
8,399 **views** on the Dairy Job Opportunities webpage (49% growth compared to last year)

Growing What Matters

Progress looks different for every farm, so the key is finding the growth areas that matter to each farm's bottom line. Throughout 2025-26, the Center offered several grant opportunities that provided seed money for growth-related investments as well as one-on-one consulting to help farms achieve steady growth day by day.





"I really appreciated my consultant's advice. It's a neutral party sitting down with you. It works really well to have him sit with you as you're putting things on paper," shared Lonnie Horst, a PA dairy farmer who utilized the Center's consulting grants.

"The Dairy Productivity Grant was a blessing in helping to fund a portion of the significant upfront investment in an activity monitoring system. The new monitoring system has improved our breeding results, herd health and overall ability to lead our herd to profitability," shared a PA dairy farmer who received a Dairy Productivity Grant.

For many dairy farm families, growth often involves folding different generations and family members into the business. A third-party perspective through the Center's Transition Team Grants can mean the difference between a successful generational transition where emotions are kept in check or a transition that brings tension employees can feel in every area of the dairy business.

"There are so many times where you feel alone going through a farm transitions [that make you question] what the transition will look like. My consultant helped us dissect that [question] as a family. Without the farm transition grant, things would have looked different. It helped us sit down and put in writing what the future looked like," shared Kerry Zeiset, a PA dairy farmer who received a Transition Team Grant.



Scan to hear Kerry's story



GRANTS AND CONSULTING RESOURCES

55 dairy producers utilized **Dairy Decisions Consultants (DDC) grants**
14 dairy farm families utilized **Transformation Team Grants** and **14** families used **Transition Team Grants**
22 dairy producers received **Dairy Productivity Grants** to boost milk production and farm efficiency
34 families worked one-on-one with consultants on transition, business, and financial planning
94 individuals attended the "Passing the Torch" Transition Planning Workshop series

Inspiring Innovation

The Center inspires innovation through both our grant programs and professional development opportunities. Partnering with the PA Department of Agriculture, the Center helped several PA dairy producers utilize funding through the Dairy Innovation Grant to invest in activity monitoring systems to boost efficiency.

"Receiving the grant was the final push we needed to go ahead with the purchase of the monitoring system. The grant made the purchase more affordable for our farm and made it possible to implement the system on our heifers as well," shared a PA dairy farmer who received the Dairy Innovation Grant.



The Center works to spark innovation at the annual PA Dairy Summit, where we partner with the Professional Dairy Managers of PA (PDMP) to host networking and discussion groups to spark idea-sharing among participants. To help dairy farmers learn from one another all year long, our Cow-Side Conversations podcast series allows listeners to hear new herd management approaches, and more importantly, gives farmers a feeling of hope knowing they are not alone with farm-level challenges they might be facing.



"My dad has had health issues this past year that have given us a lot of struggles with the farm. Listening to Jeremy's story [on the Center's podcast] reminded me of the struggles we are facing. Thank you for helping him share that. I feel like it gives me a little hope that our situation will work out how it's supposed to," shared a dairy farmer who listens to the Cow-Side Conversations podcast series.

To create another outlet for sharing dairy producers' ideas, the Center launched a Farmer-Made Ingenuity Contest this past year to encourage dairy producers to exchange innovative, farmer-made solutions.

"The Farmer-Made Ingenuity Contest is a great way to see how other dairy families are creating tools to make their lives easier. I enjoy seeing these homemade inventions and seeing if we can utilize something similar or spark another idea that is tailored to our farm," said Donny Bartch, a PA dairy farmer who placed second in the contest.



Scan to view farmer-made ideas

INNOVATION RESOURCES

24 dairy producers received **Dairy Innovation Grants** to support farm-level innovation projects

11 dairy producers submitted innovative solutions in the **Farmer-Made Ingenuity Contest**

375 people attended the 2026 PA Dairy Summit

31,780 downloads to date of the Cow-Side Conversations podcast

Boosting Management Mindset

The Center works to boost dairy producers' management mindset through financial, risk management, and business planning resources. Through our "Protecting Your Profits" podcast and webinar series, we amplify our partnerships with industry experts to bring a wider range of business perspectives to the table. Producer panels at the annual Dairy Financial Conference give dairy producers the platform to share firsthand perspective on topics that are often challenging to talk openly about – such as cash flow and risk management.

"Getting to rock bottom helped us all come to an agreement that we had to do something. We formed a Profit Team of a nutritionist, lender and other financial consultants. Our accountant kept the numbers in line, and our nutritionist helped make sure we weren't overspending on ingredients," shared Dee Shafer of Shafdon Farms, one of the panelists at the Dairy Financial Conference.



From weekly Markets & Management columns to regular "All Things Dairy" conference calls and on-farm animal care workshops, the Center is bringing industry partners and organizations together to help dairy producers boost their business acumen and farm-level management skills.



Scan to listen to "Protecting Your Profits" series



"All stations at the animal care workshops [were] very well done. I loved that there were veterinarians there to speak, and I loved the hands-on sessions and troubleshooting," shared a dairy producer who attended the animal care workshop.



FINANCIAL LITERACY AND MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

982 people reached through bi-monthly **"All Things Dairy" conference calls**

106 people attended the **2025 Dairy Financial Conference**

1,494 people reached through the **"Protecting Your Profits"** webinar and podcast series (78% growth compared to last year)

3,500,000+ people reached through weekly Markets & Management updates

158 dairy producers attended **animal care workshop** to boost farm-level management skills

Sparking Stories & Connection

As a public:private partnership, the Center serves as a catalyst for building connections through storytelling. This past year, we showcased farms with a 100+ year history through a "Farmer Strong, America Proud" campaign that highlighted the deep history of Pennsylvania's dairy farm community. The Center also worked alongside PA Preferred to cultivate connections with consumers and drive traffic to farm-based creameries through the PA Ice Cream Trail.

"We love to connect families of all ages with our cows, help them experience farm life, and celebrate where their favorite dairy treats begin. [These events] bring generations together through the love of ice cream and create connections across Pennsylvania's urban, suburban, and rural communities in support of agriculture," said Carolyn Eaglehouse of Chester Springs Creamery.



"The original deed for Irishtown Acres was 1809, which is also the year Abraham Lincoln was born. Currently the farm is being operated by the fifth generation and beginning the transition to the sixth generation. The value of family has remained the same, but the size and scale has changed. Today there are 550 cows and 1,200 acres farmed with diversity of custom harvesting, soybean and corn production, and a small beef herd. This diversity is one of our farm's strengths," shared Irishtown Acres, a PA dairy farm that shared their story on the Farmer Strong, America Proud landing page.



The Center also connects Pennsylvania legislators directly to a progressive dairy farm through the Dairy Excellence Foundation's "Adopt A Cow" program. By allowing legislators to follow along with the program, we are building deeper connections between those creating food policy and those actually producing the food. This past year, we took that a step further by inviting legislators to the PA Calving Corner exhibit to meet their adopted calf.

Scan to meet farmers with 100+ year history



INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

750+ producers requested **"Choose PA Dairy"** storytelling material (50% growth compared to last year)

26 producers with **farm-based creameries** are part of the PA Ice Cream Trail

155,823 pageviews on the CDE website

3,700 subscribers to the CDE e-newsletter

Private industry partners stepped up in 2025-26 to increase both their financial and in-kind support of the Center for Dairy Excellence, enabling the Center to document a more than 1:1 match between the public side and the private side. This demonstrates the Center's true purpose as a public:private partnership benefiting Pennsylvania's dairy industry.

FUNDING SOURCES TOTAL	
Agricultural Excellence Line	$ 1,500,000
Center for Dairy Excellence Foundation	$ 321,360
Industry Support	$ 85,833
Grants	$ 478,067
Other	$ 86,885
TOTAL	**$ 2,472,145**

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES TOTAL	
Programs	$ 1,692,669
Partnerships	$ 166,129
Administration	$ 139,922
Events	$ 347,495
Fundraising	$ 27,817
TOTAL	**$ 2,374,032**

(The financial statements are unaudited)

Center for Dairy Excellence Board Members

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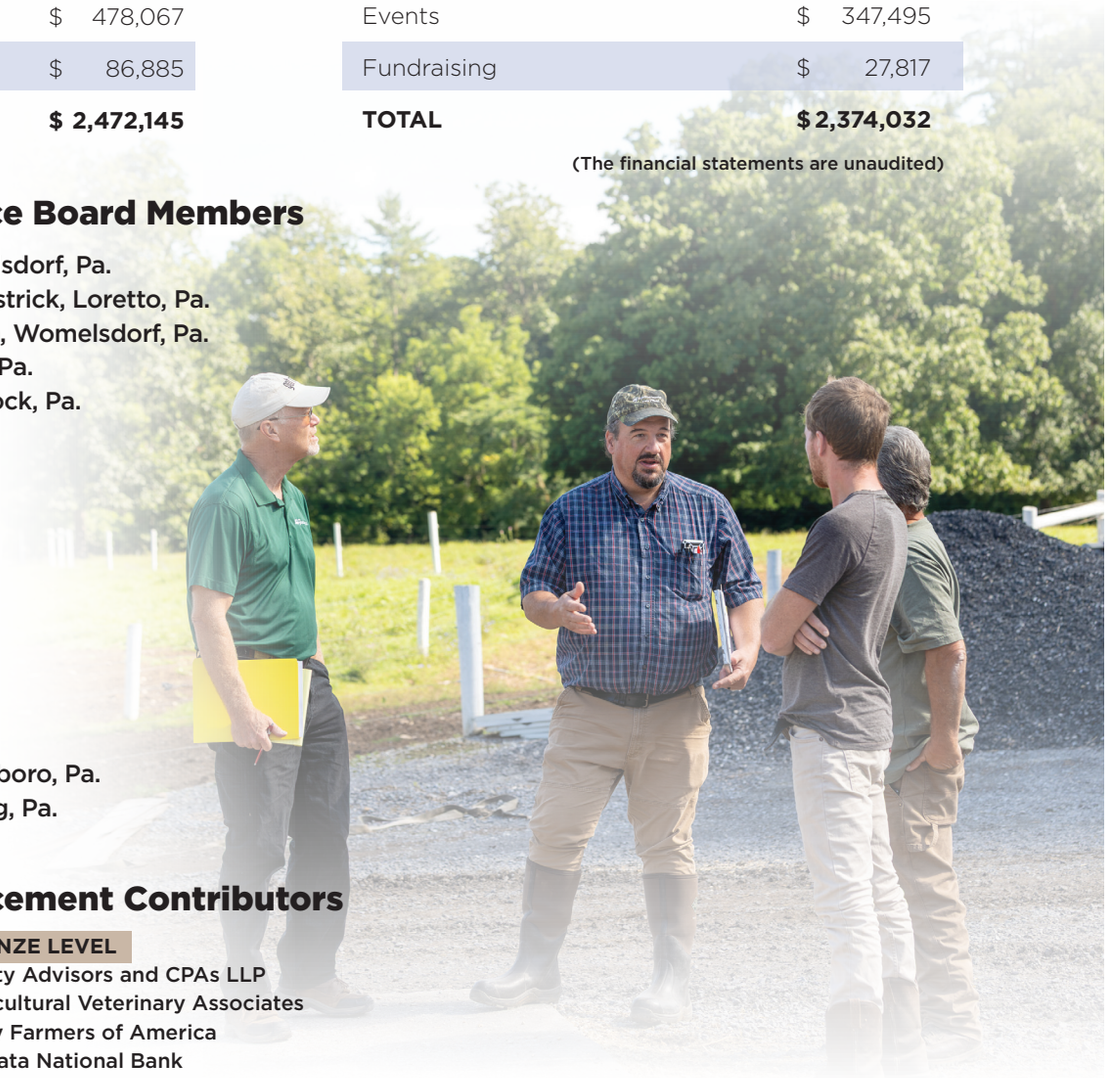

2025-26 Allies for Advancement Contributors

GOLD LEVEL
PA Department of Agriculture
Farm Credit

SILVER LEVEL
Land O'Lakes Foundation
Farmshine *
Lancaster Farming *
Progressive Dairy *
Total Farm Marketing*
Fulton Bank
Maola Local Dairies
Mt. Joy Farmers Co-Op Association

(indicates in-kind contribution)*

BRONZE LEVEL
Acuity Advisors and CPAs LLP
Agricultural Veterinary Associates
Dairy Farmers of America
Ephrata National Bank
Farmer Boy Ag Inc.
Premier Select Sires, Inc.
Simon Lever

In addition to our Allies for Advancement, the Center's funding support is provided by:

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Bureau of Market Development
The Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association
Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

ALLIES FOR ADVANCEMENT
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