



For Immediate Release

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DAIRY AND BEEF CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCE JOINT INITIATIVE TO ASSIST FARMS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE COMPLIANCE

Grants and Compliance Plan Writing Workshops Offered in 2017

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Pennsylvania Center for Dairy Excellence and Center for Beef Excellence announce a joint initiative to provide support and resources to both dairy and beef farms in meeting baseline agricultural compliance. By 2025, Pennsylvania agriculture is responsible for reducing nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment runoff to meet the annual allowed discharges entering the Chesapeake Bay, a number set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the federal Clean Water Act in 2010.

"Dairy and beef farmers' role in protecting clean water is an important concern that we must address to be successful today and in the future," said Jayne Sebright, executive director for the Center for Dairy Excellence. "The Centers for Excellence are offering financial assistance and other support to help Pennsylvania farmers meet and exceed the requirements to ensure water quality and stewardship of the land."

The Centers will work in partnership with local conservation districts to support and conduct workshops helping dairy and beef farmers write Agriculture Erosion & Sediment and/or Manure Management Plans. The workshop schedule, planned for February and March 2017, will be announced in December. The Centers will also offer financial assistance to dairy or beef farms that need professional assistance in developing plans and meeting baseline compliance.

"Cattle producers and dairymen from across the state have a strong track record of implementing practices that enrich the land and water qualities on their farms," said Ann Nogan, executive director for the Center for Beef Excellence. "This partnership will provide them with the resources to document production improvements and ensure that they have taken the steps to show how their efforts play a role in the solution to control nutrients and meet the regulatory requirements established for the state."

Pennsylvania plays a significant role in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. According to the Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania comprises 35 percent of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, with the Susquehanna River supply more than half of the fresh water flowing into the bay.

Support for this joint initiative is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Ag Excellence initiative within the state budget. It complements a growing emphasis on helping Pennsylvania's agricultural producers to contribute to



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water quality improvement goals, particularly within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, by offering assistance for beef and dairy farmers to attain a base level of compliance with state conservation and clean water requirements.

For more information, dairy farmers and beef farmers can contact:

- Center for Dairy Excellence at 717-346-0849 or via email info@centerfordairyexcellence.org.
- Center for Beef Excellence at (717) 705-1689 or via email at anoganCBE@gmail.com.
- Ombudsman Beth Futrick at (814) 696-0877 ext. 113 or via email at bfutrick@blairconservationdistrict.org.
- Agricultural Ombudsman Shelly Dehoff at 717-880-0848 or via email at shellydehoff@lancasterconservation.org.

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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.