



CENTER FOR
DairyEXCELLENCE

For Immediate Release

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**DAIRY INNOVATION GRANT NOW OPEN FOR PRE-APPLICATIONS TO FUND TECHNOLOGY
INVESTMENTS ON PA DAIRY FARMS**

The Grants Would Support Investments that Improve Efficiency, Enhance Production and Increase Energy Efficiency

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Center for Dairy Excellence is now accepting pre-applications for Dairy Innovation Grants. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture introduced the Pennsylvania Ag Innovation Fund to support investments that embrace technology to improve efficiency and data analytics on dairy operations; enhance production; and increase energy efficiency on the farm or in ag processing. Projects could involve technology within the milking parlor, feeding system, activity monitoring, ventilation, and cow cooling aspects of the operation.

The Center for Dairy Excellence would qualify for a Regional Impact Grant through the PA Ag Innovation Fund and plans to pursue grant funding to award Dairy Innovation Grants to up to 20 dairy farm operations that are wanting to invest in technology to enhance their operation. If accepted, it would allow the Center to award up to \$25,000 in matching funds to those farms. Farms that are successful in the Center’s pre-application process would be included with the Center’s application as a Regional Impact Project to the PA Ag Innovation Fund. Due to the nature of this process, there will not be any funding awarded unless the Center’s application is approved. This is a competitive grant program, and dairy producers must apply by November 1 to give the Center enough time to submit its application to the Pennsylvania Dairy Innovation Fund.

“Investing in new technology on PA dairy farms is exciting and can really boost efficiency and production. But it can be a huge expense for most dairy farm families,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “If our application is accepted, these Dairy Innovation Grants could help ease upfront costs and make it possible for dairy producers to pursue innovative technology that can drive their operations forward.”

If funded, the Dairy Innovation Grant Program would award matching grants to the farms selected into the program of up to \$25,000 in matching funds or up to a 50 percent match in total cost of up to \$50,000. These funds are provided to reimburse farmers once the dollars are spent, so the total funding received will depend on the total cost of the project.

Farm operations within Pennsylvania with anticipated annual sales of more than \$2,000 and more than 35 mature dairy cows or 70 mature dairy goats are eligible to apply, if they meet the following requirements:

- Must have a conservation plan, manure management plan, and knowledge of financials
- Must be participating in National FARM or similar animal care program
- Must be a farm operation with anticipated farm sales of greater than \$2,000 per year and at least 35 dairy cows in their lactating dairy herd or 70 goats in their lactating goat herd.
- Must provide a letter of support from their farm to submit with our larger application to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. A template is provided within the application.
- Must provide thorough description and industry-researched estimate for technology investment they want to be funded through grant
- Must demonstrate commitment to long-term sustainability of the operation
- Must be willing to provide metrics before and after in milk production, quality and components, reproduction, and herd health to demonstrate impact.

Potential projects cannot be started prior to January 1, 2025 and have up to two years to be completed. Projects could include technology investments to automate ventilation and cooling systems in housing areas such as temperature-controlled fans, misters, and curtains. Other ideas of projects include activity monitoring system for improved herd health and reproduction; automation in feeding systems to monitor ration ingredients, intakes, and/or inventories; and automation in milking parlor/systems to capture data analytics and improve efficiency. Construction of facilities is not an eligible expense.

Successful farms would be notified of their acceptance into the pre-application period in November but would not know whether the funding is awarded until January 2025 upon announcement of the Pennsylvania Ag Innovation Grant Awardees.

To learn more and submit a pre-application by November 1, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/dairy-innovation-grants. Contact Melissa Anderson at 717-788-0296 or manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org with questions about the program.

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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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