



CENTER FOR
DairyEXCELLENCE

For Immediate Release

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GRANT PROGRAM TO OPEN SEPT. 1 FOR PA DAIRY PRODUCERS WHO WANT TO IMPROVE COW COMFORT, MILK PRODUCTION PER COW OR OVERALL EFFICIENCY

The Competitive Grant Program Will Be Open From September 1 to November 1

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Center for Dairy Excellence will open its competitive Dairy Excellence Grant program on September 1, 2024 for Pennsylvania dairy producers. Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the PA Dairymen’s Association, the grants support improvement projects on the farm to help dairy producers enhance cow comfort, milk production and overall efficiency. The grant program has a limited window to apply. Dairy producers can apply for the annual grant program from September 1 to November 1, 2024.

“Whether you want to upgrade your calf housing, improve cow comfort with a new bedding, feeding or heat abatement system, or implement new technology that drives efficiency, these grants can help put your goals into action,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “After implementing on-farm improvement projects, many of our grant recipients notice moderate to major improvements in both milk production per cow and overall profitability of their dairy operation.”

The Dairy Excellence Grant program 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 November 1, 2024, with selections made and winning applicants notified by November 18.

“We were upgrading from calf hutches for multiple reasons. We went from housing for 9 to housing for 12. It has been about two years, and we have seen stronger, healthier heifers just because of the updated facilities that better suit our needs,” said Lori Kauffman of Kauffman Dairy Farm, a previous grant recipient. “Any chance to better your farm and your productivity makes a big difference in this journey of dairy farming. [The grant] might not cover the entire project, but for us, it made the difference between us having enough to swing it or put it off another year.”

Improvement projects can include anything related to improving milk production per cow and/or enhancing overall farm profitability and efficiency. 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; cow brush or foot bath installation; and enhanced feed systems for approved projects.

“We used the grant to help put fans and sprinklers in the holding area to improve our fresh cow group and pre-fresh groups. After this project, we did not experience the typical five or six pound summer fall-off in milk production. We might have dropped a pound or two in the worst of the heat, but it wasn’t as drastic as it had been,” said Andy Helman of Guilside Farm, a previous grant recipient. “It improved milk production because it allowed us to continue to grow – instead of having to recover our milk production. Before the project, we were in the 72-pound range, and after the project, we started pushing 82 pounds.”

A \$100 application fee is required but will be reimbursed if the application is not accepted. This grant is for Pennsylvania dairy farms only. A selection committee will award grants based on the impact the project would have on cow comfort and overall milk production, the detail in which the applicant describes what the project involves and how the project will benefit their operation, and the willingness of the applicant to provide requested information or to seek help in providing requested information.

To learn more about the grant opportunity and to apply online, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/dairy-excellence-grants. To receive a copy of the grant application by mail, call Melissa Anderson at 717-788-0296. Email Melissa at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org with additional questions about the grant 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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