



**For Immediate Release**

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**Center Testifies at Hearing about Pennsylvania's Dairy Industry**  
State House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Holds Hearing to Review Industry

**Harrisburg** – Representatives of the Center for Dairy Excellence explained the crucial role the dairy industry – Pennsylvania's leading agricultural sector – plays in local and state economies during a recent hearing held by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

Lolly Leshar, a Bernville, Berks County, dairy producer and the center's board president, and John Frey, executive director of the center shared testimony with host Majority Chair Representative John Maher and committee members to show how the industry functions in Pennsylvania and the key variables responsible for change in the industry.

Testimonies reviewed the dairy industry from "cow to consumer," featuring producers, processors, retailers and other industry representatives.

"Pennsylvania's dairy industry is the fifth largest in milk production and second largest in total number of dairy farms in the nation," Frey told the committee members. "It's an incredibly important industry to our commonwealth, generating \$4.5 billion in economic revenue and supporting more than 40,000 jobs in the food and agriculture sectors."

Leshar aimed to personalize the industry by sharing a virtual tour of her family's 120-cow dairy farm and retail store. "Our family farm and retail store employ more than 30 members of our community, contributing millions in economic impact for the Berks County region, just as other farms across the state do for their communities."

Leshar also mentioned the importance of a strong dairy industry for future generations of producers, like her four children.

"Our children are the fifth generation on our farm, and we want to provide them the choice and the opportunity to be a part of this business when they are older," she said. "By planning for the future at home and statewide, we should be able to transition our operation to them."

Frey explained the evolution of the state's dairy industry during the past 40 years and highlighted what brought the changes.

"The number of dairy farms in this state is less than a third of what we had in 1970," Frey said. "However, milk production has grown by 68 percent with nearly 150,000 fewer cows. That progress is the result of advances in technology and efficient management on the farm."



Frey and Leshar shared the podium with other dairy industry leaders, including producers David Graybill of Mifflintown, Juniata County; Duane Hertzler of Loysville, Perry County; and Walt Moore of West Grove, Chester County.

Other producers who provided testimony on processing and marketing products included Joyce Bupp, York, York County, represented Dairy Farmers of America; Jim Madigan, Towanda, Bradford County, represented Dairylea Cooperative; Tom Wakefield, Bedford, Bedford County, represented Land O'Lakes; and Richard Mosemann, Warfordsburg, Fulton County, represented Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association.

Agribusinesses representing the research, veterinary, milk sanitation, feed supply, agricultural lending and building construction aspects of the industry also participated in the hearing.

Dr. James Dunn from the Pennsylvania State University and Erick Coolidge, a dairy producer from Wellsboro, Tioga County, and member of the center board, provided an update on federal policy and national and international market forces affecting dairy. Coolidge is one of two Pennsylvania representatives to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Dairy Industry Advisory Committee.

Frey concluded his testimony by saying "with much of the nation's population located within a day's drive from Pennsylvania, we need a strong supply of locally produced, high quality milk and dairy products. It's critical we keep the dairy industry growing in Pennsylvania."

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The Center for Dairy Excellence is a non-profit organization developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and was launched in January 2004 by Governor Edward G. Rendell. 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 about the Center at [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org).