



## For Immediate Release

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### **Center Program Can Offer Dairy Business Roadmap for Producers**

Dairy Decisions Consultants Help Evaluate Business Changes, Opportunities

**Harrisburg** – Pennsylvania dairy producers can receive up to \$1,500 to tap into the expertise of a Center for Dairy Excellence “Dairy Decisions Consultant” to make decisions that will help shape the future of their dairy business.

Fourteen individuals with experience in whole farm analysis and viability studies are available to producers through grants from the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association and the U. S. Agriculture Department.

Matt Espenshade of Evergreen-Valley Farm in Elizabethtown, Lancaster County, worked with a consultant to help his family address the future of their farm.

“We realized we needed to make major changes in our dairy operation to remain profitable, but we were unsure of where to start,” Espenshade said. “In working with a dairy decision consultant, we were able to evaluate where our primary bottlenecks were and develop a plan to address our most critical challenges first.”

The consultant will evaluate the farm’s business performance, financial position and cost of production. Together, the families and consultants will explore scenarios for strengthening the farm’s balance sheet and improving financial performance while helping the family identify strategies for making strong future decisions.

“Going through the process with the consultant gave us a roadmap through the difficult choices, helping us to take one step at a time and keeping us from becoming overwhelmed,” Espenshade said.

“This program allows us to make consulting services available to farms that may not have used consultants or accessed center programs in the past,” said John Frey, executive director of the Center for Dairy Excellence. “By working with a consultant, farm families can gain outside perspective of their business operation and identify solutions they may not have uncovered on their own.”

To participate in the Dairy Decisions Consultant program, dairy farms must apply and submit with the application a current balance sheet and income statement. All information will be kept confidential. A \$250 application fee must also be submitted with the application, which will be returned if the application is not approved.

Producers applying to the program must have a demonstrated need for unique consulting services and show a sincere interest in improving both herd performance and financial position. The program will fund a maximum of 15 hours, or \$1,500 of time, for the consultant to spend with each individual farm business.



To download an application or for more information about the Dairy Decision Consultant program, visit the center's website at [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org). Click on the "DDC" logo on the middle of the home page, or call the center at 717-346-0849 for more details.

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The Center for Dairy Excellence is an initiative of the Department of Agriculture and was launched in January 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 about the Center at [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org).