



## For Immediate Release

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### **DAIRY FARMERS HELPING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS BETTER UNDERSTAND INDUSTRY'S IMPORTANCE**

More than 25 Farmers Traveling PA to Discuss Dairy Issues

**Harrisburg** – More than 25 Pennsylvania dairy farmers are helping organizations in communities across the state better understand the issues facing their industry and the benefits dairy operations can have on local economies.

The farmers are part of the new Pennsylvania Dairy Farmer Speakers Bureau, a program designed to put communities in touch with knowledgeable people working in the industry.

Since January 2010, the group has addressed 10 different organizations, informing more than 450 people on issues such as animal care, milk quality and environmental stewardship. Another 30 presentations have been scheduled across the state for the remainder of the year.

“We are pleased to see more organizations taking advantage of this opportunity to educate their members on the role our dairy farms play in local communities,” said John Frey, executive director of the Center for Dairy Excellence. “By reaching out to these organizations one by one, the speakers bureau can help dairy farmers educate their neighbors on just how important the dairy industry is to the local economies in which these farms are located.”

Frey noted that every dairy cow in a community is estimated to contribute more than \$13,500 to the local economy. Statewide, Pennsylvania’s dairy industry contributes \$4.5 billion to the state’s economy, making it the largest sector of the agriculture industry.

There are approximately 7,400 dairy farms in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is the fifth largest milk producing state in the nation with its 541,000 dairy cows producing 10.6 billion pounds, or 5.6 percent of the nation’s total milk supply annually. The state also ranks third in butter production and seventh in cheese production.

“The response from the participating organizations has been very positive as they have found the presentations extremely educational and enjoyable,” said Shirley Krall, a Lebanon County dairy farmer who works with speakers bureau’s participants to schedule appearances. “The program has really opened the door to allow us to share our story of farm and family with our local communities.”



The Pennsylvania Dairy Farmer Speakers Bureau is coordinated by the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association and Center for Dairy Excellence. Participants who enroll receive training and help in scheduling appearances.

“The speakers bureau is an integral part of the dairy checkoff’s ‘Telling Your Story’ program designed to help dairy farmers speak out on behalf of their industry,” said Patricia Purcell, CEO of Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association. “Through the program, we provided training workshops for members who are interested in helping us build positive relationships with our local communities and consumers.”

Anyone interested in scheduling a dairy farmer to speak at an upcoming community meeting should contact Shirley Krall at 717-821-0259 or [dairyspeakerscheduler@gmail.com](mailto:dairyspeakerscheduler@gmail.com). Krall can also help those interested in learning about or participating in upcoming Pennsylvania Dairy Farmers Speakers Bureau training sessions.

For more information about the Center for Dairy Excellence, visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.com](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.com). For more information about Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association, Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program and dairy checkoff-funded programs, visit [www.dairyspot.com](http://www.dairyspot.com), or contact Laura England at 267-322-6904 or [lengland@milk4u.org](mailto:lengland@milk4u.org).

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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).