



For Immediate Release

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DAIRY PROS PARTICIPANTS TRAINED ON RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING, PA DAIRY TOOL

Harrisburg – More than 100 dairy sales and service professionals gained insight and tools to help build stronger relationships with their dairy farm families at four Dairy PROS workshops, hosted by the Center for Dairy Excellence and Penn State Dairy Alliance in July.

Dr. Robert Milligan, senior consultant with Dairy Strategies, LLC, and professor emeritus at Cornell University, led a discussion and case study review on building customer relationships in challenging economic times. He also stressed the importance of good listening skills in improving relations.

“Relationships are all about trust,” he said. “Increasing the trust your customers or clients have in you improves the relationship you have with that customer.

“You also need to be an active listener, waiting two to three seconds before replying to make sure you understand the person, and ask questions for clarification.”

Milligan also showed how change affects each person differently. “Research shows we all follow one of two behavior patterns following any change in either our personal or work life – viewing change as a loss or an opportunity.”

Milligan discussed the steps involved with each behavior pattern, and explained that viewing change as a loss can affect a person’s ability to make decisions.

“When you are working with a client who is struggling through the decision-making process, it is important that you provide empathy and help them move through the change cycle,” he said.

Each Dairy PROS meeting also featured Dr. Lisa Holden and Rebecca White from Penn State Dairy Alliance who reviewed the PA Dairy Tool and provided a case study on a farm that improved its performance and profitability using the tool. The PA Dairy Tool was created by Penn State Cooperative Extension to help dairy farm families identify bottlenecks to profitability in the operation.

Holden explained how the PA Dairy Tool was used on a farm above average in many key herd management areas but struggling on profitability. The tool helped identify forage quality and overcrowding as limiting issues for the farm’s potential to profit.

“The tool does a great job really pinpointing your greatest risk to profitability,” she said, reminding participants that the PA Dairy Tool is available online, free of charge, at the Penn State Dairy Alliance website, www.dairyalliance.org.



"Many extension educators and industry representatives are trained to use the tool for farms," Holden said. "Penn State offers customized training opportunities for organizations that would like to have staff trained to use the tool."

Dairy PROS is a new initiative of the Center for Dairy Excellence and Penn State Dairy Alliance exclusively for professionals who work in lending, accounting, feed and nutrition, veterinary, pharmaceutical, extension, genetics, and other areas of the dairy industry to provide services to producers. Dairy PROS workshops are held three times during the year, with the next series scheduled for October 2010.

For more information about Dairy PROS, call the Center for Dairy Excellence at 717-346-0849 or Dairy Alliance at 1-888-373-7232, or visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org and click on "Industry Professionals" or the "Dairy PROS" logo at the bottom of the home page.

Penn State Dairy Alliance is an initiative of Penn State Cooperative Extension. Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and diversity in its workforce.

Media contact: Jayne Sebright, 717-259-6496; c-jsebrigh@state.pa.us

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The Center for Dairy Excellence is an initiative of the 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.