



**For Immediate Release**

**Nov. 30, 2010**

**PROFIT FORUM OFFERS INSIGHT FOR FARM, FAMILY AND BUSINESS**

Event Focused on Multi-Generational Family Business Survival

**Harrisburg** – More than 200 dairy farmers and agribusiness representatives learned tips to help multi-generational family businesses survive, and dairy farm management advice for future business success at the two 2010 Pennsylvania Dairy Profitability Forums. The events were hosted by the Center for Dairy Excellence, Pennsylvania Dairy Task Force and Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture this month.

According to one of two keynote speakers, Mike McGrann, director of the S. Dale High Center for Family Business, only 40 percent of family businesses survive to the second generation.

“Having family meetings, creating a board of directors, and developing a written plan in place are critical to the survival of a family business,” McGrann said. “Family meetings build unity and provide the opportunity to identify what really matters together.”

McGrann said family members must address difficult questions together, such as “why are we doing this?” “What does this farm mean to you?” “What are your goals?”

“You need to build understanding, and it’s important to respond, not react,” he recommended.

Outlining a plan is also critical to building trust within a family business, according to McGrann. “By clarifying individual responsibilities, budgets, accountability, expectations and boundaries, you eliminate the ambiguity and avoid opportunities for conflict.”

Dr. Wayne Weiland, midwest regional manager for Standard Dairy Consulting, spoke about the essentials for future success on a dairy farm. Weiland consults with hundreds of the nation’s dairies, focusing on the relationship between high production, health and animal well-being.

Weiland identified 10 essential topics for succession in four key management areas of the dairy farm: business, operation, people and cows. “While not all-inclusive, these items have broad-reaching applications for 100-cow dairies with all family labor, and for 3,000-cow dairies with middle management and all hired labor.”

The key essentials Weiland identified included:

1. Having a decision making process in place;
2. Managing your margin through risk management;
3. Having a cow-friendly facility with size-matched components;



4. Having quality inputs, including high quality forages and clean, consistent commodities;
5. Having leadership focused on leading, not just managing;
6. Providing clarity for employees;
7. Creating written standard operating procedures;
8. Managing transition cows closely;
9. Closely managing reproduction; and
10. Having a sound nutrition program in place.

The forum also included a panel discussion with participants in AgBiz Masters, a blended learning program with more than 200 participants. In Harrisburg, participants in the panel included Neil Hertzler, Loysville, Perry County; Ron Wenger, Pleasant Hall, Franklin County; and Jason Brandt, Mount Joy, Lancaster County. At the forum in western Pennsylvania, Brooks Rynd, Cochran, Crawford County; Greg Painter, Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland County; and Jason and Chad Smith, Mayport, Clarion County, participated in the panel discussion.

Breakout sessions included:

- "Growing Healthy Calves," with Dr. Sam Leadly, calf and heifer management specialist for Attica Veterinary Associates;
- "Dairy and the Environment," with Doug Goodlander, director of nutrient and odor management act programs with the State Conservation Commission; and
- "Minimizing Mastitis While Spending Little," with Dr. David Wolfgang, director of field investigations and extension veterinarian with the Penn State Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences.

Presentation materials and hand-outs and a video of McGrann's presentation from the forum are available at [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org). Click on "PA Dairy Profitability Forum," then "News and Events."

Sponsors for the profit forum included Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association and the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, Binkley & Hurst, Genex Cooperative, Hometown Heritage Bank, Lancaster Dairy Farm Automation, Lancaster DHIA, Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association, PNC Bank, Select Sire Power and Witmer Feed & Grain.

"Through sponsorship support and a grant provided by the Department of Labor and Industry's Workforce Investment Board, we are able to offer the forum each year at a reduced cost to participants," said John Frey, executive director of the Center for Dairy Excellence. "We are grateful for this support in bringing valuable insight and information to our dairy farm community."

For more information about the Pennsylvania Dairy Profitability Forum or other resources available from the Center for Dairy Excellence, visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org) or call 717-346-0849.

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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).