

## **2008 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION**

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-E-20PA

**Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:**

State: *Pennsylvania*

Assign Program Category (*Natural Resources – Agriculture*): (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name:  
*Center for Dairy Excellence*
2. Administering Agency:  
*Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture*
3. Contact Person:  
*John Frey, Executive Director*
4. Address:  
*2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg PA 17110-9408*
5. Telephone Number:  
*717-346-0849*
6. FAX Number:  
*717-705-2342*
7. E-mail Address:  
[c-jfrey@state.pa.us](mailto:c-jfrey@state.pa.us)
8. Web site Address:  
[www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org)
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.
  - a. *The Center for Dairy Excellence is an initiative created to serve as the lead organization for Pennsylvania's dairy industry. This initiative functions to carry out programs and initiatives that result from industry wide collaboration through the Pennsylvania Dairy Task Force. This group of over 100 industry stakeholders provides ideas and initiatives that will improve the profitability of the over 8500 PA dairy farms representing the largest industry in the Commonwealth. The Center for Dairy Excellence manages and coordinates these initiatives and programs with guidance from the Dairy Task Force..*

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

*Four years and two months.*

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

**a. *The Center's charge is to "Empower people, create partnerships, and coordinate resources to grow dairy profitability in Pennsylvania and throughout the Northeast.***

*b. State-provided programs for PA's dairy industry were dispersed among several Bureaus within the Department of Agriculture, making it difficult to consolidate and coordinate their objectives, resources and profitability objectives.*

*PA's dairy industry is vital to the state's economy, with annual cash receipts exceeding \$1.8B, and a contribution over \$15B to the economy when the impact through associated businesses is considered. (PA ranks # 5 nationally in total milk produced and 40% of PA agriculture revenues come from the dairy sector. The number of farms, cows, and overall milk production had been declining due to a lack of consistent strategies and goals for the industry.*

*Leadership, development of partnerships across the industry, goals and strategic planning provided by the Center for Dairy Excellence, have combined to strengthen the dairy industry and solidify its economic impact for the benefit of the commonwealth and its citizens.*

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

*a. The idea for the program was initiated by the Secretary of Agriculture and his staff.*

*b. The Secretary appointed a Pennsylvania Dairy Task Force representing all facets of the dairy industry.*

*c. The idea for a "Center" to execute the daily progress towards achieving the objectives of the Task Force was conceived. It was suggested that this Center would be housed at and affiliated with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.. The Dairy Task Force was in favor of creating the Center for Dairy Excellence.*

*d. An Executive Director was hired to lead the program(s) of the Center.*

*e. Personal contacts were made with the respective Bureaus/people/organizations within the Department and across the industry to gather input, identify resources and opportunities, and initiate "partnership" relationships.*

*f. High priority has been given for opportunities for the Executive Director to speak to dairy industry groups to share the Center's vision, solicit support and input, further identify partnering opportunities, and initiate programs that would positively impact dairy farm profitability.*

*g. Appropriate Dairy Industry Task Force committees were established considering the key needs of the industry to move it towards goals consistent with a growing dairy industry. The five committees and areas of focus are Education, Economic Development, Business Management, Government & Community Relations,, and Information & Communications. Each committee has members from the Dairy Task Force, the Department of Agriculture, and the key dairy organizations in the state, the state universities and Cooperative Extension, and government agencies.*

*h. The following programs were developed to address immediate industry needs, as identified by the Dairy Task Force:*

*i. On-Farm Advisory "Profit Team" Program*

- ii. *Risk Management Training Program for producers*
- iii. *Dairy Advocacy and Resource Teams (DART) increased two-way communication at the producer level.*
- i. *Routine committee meetings are held (4x annually), with each committee assigning, as appropriate specific focus areas to work groups within the committees to carry out their work between meetings and bring reports and/or recommendations back to the committee.*
- j. *The Center coordinates projects with the Dairy Task Force for which multiple industry organizations / companies / individuals collaborate to address common issues (i.e. development of a training program, consolidating industry events / activities, etc).*
- k. *The Center fosters inter-agency cooperation among government entities focusing on common goals to improve dairy profitability.*
- l. *The Center created two websites:*
  - i. [www.CenterforDairyExcellence.org](http://www.CenterforDairyExcellence.org) *which serves dairy producers, the allied industry, and internal (PDA and other governmental) entities, as a dairy resource library and common communication tool for everyone to use within and across the industry and, in 2007,*
  - ii. [www.DiscoverDairy.com](http://www.DiscoverDairy.com) *“Discover Dairy – Beyond the Refrigerator” enables consumers to learn about animal care, milk production, environmental practices and community actions involving farms. This engaging educational curriculum series is designed for the third and fourth grade levels.*

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

- a. *Up until this time, there had been no other Departments of Agriculture who had taken the leadership role to support and grow the dairy industry in their state like this initiative does. This initiative, unlike any other, has brought all stakeholders together working in concert for the improvement and growth of disparate industry. The creativity is augmented by the fact that public, private, institutional, organizational, and individual boundaries have been removed to focus on a common mission and vision, resulting in improved efficiency across government and private enterprises. Since the inception of the Pennsylvania Dairy Task Force and Center for Dairy Excellence, other states have adopted this model for their industry. New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Maryland have established similar Dairy Task Force models and New York has created a “Center for Dairy Excellence”.*

14. What were the program’s start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

- a. *Initial staffing needs required one executive position, travel/phone/etc expenses, an office space, limited secretarial support and standard computer, fax and related equipment. Overall starts up costs for the first year were under \$160,000. Since then, the Center staff has grown to five positions. One of these is a PDA Executive Assistant tasked to CDE and three are part time employees who perform communications, program, and project management. In the past two years, organizations have approached the Center for Dairy Excellence and solicited our partnership on specific programs and initiatives and have provided funding for these projects. Examples include the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program (PDPP) which funded the consumer education initiative entitled “Discover Dairy – beyond the refrigerator.”*

*This partnership continues to develop educational materials and resources for the dairy industry.*

15. What are the program's annual operational costs? How is the program funded?
- \$460,000.00 – The program was originally funded through a Federal Ag Innovations grant. Today, the Center's funding comes from a number of sources including Federal, State, and private sources. Grants and partnership funding have been procured to support specific projects and programs at the Center.*
16. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.
- No*
17. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?
- Basic systems (and office space) are provided by the Commonwealth operational needs. For specific projects, organizations represented on the Dairy Task Force (e.g. PSU, University of Penn, PA Dairywomen's Association, and Farm Bureau) have provided additional resources for "working group projects"*
18. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.
- Yes, this program / approach originated in Pennsylvania. Governor Rendell and the Secretary of Agriculture, Dennis C Wolff, originated the Dairy Task Force and the Center for Dairy Excellence. Secretary Wolff's address and contact information:*
- PA Department of Agriculture  
2301 North Cameron Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408  
Phone: 717-787-4956  
Email: [dwolff@state.pa.us](mailto:dwolff@state.pa.us)*
19. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?
- Prior to the inception of the Pennsylvania Dairy Task Force and Center for Dairy Excellence no such organization existed. Other states have since adopted this model for their own industries. New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Maryland all have established similar Dairy Task Force models. Additionally, New York has developed its own "Center for Dairy Excellence."*
20. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?
- The Center for Dairy Excellence is fully operational and is viewed, across the PA Dairy Industry, as the primary office of industry direction, collaboration, communication, and promotion. In the past 12 months, new programs providing support to dairy producers have been developed and implemented. The Center continues to explore opportunities to initiate growth and sustainability to the industry.*
21. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.
- The Center for Dairy Excellence's location in the Department of Agriculture Building makes it very easy to provide two-way communications, guidance, coordination, and support to the various organizations that have a tie to the state dairy industry. The*

*Center can more easily draw on the Department's resources as needed to support projects, goals and programs, providing a more consistent proactive approach for the Department and more direct support for the dairy industry.*

*The Center and its role of coordinating, collaborating, and partnering with the Commonwealth's dairy stakeholders has helped to mobilize the industry by helping industry professionals to communicate more effectively and efficiently and to address challenges and opportunities in a coordinated manner. Initially, the most significant challenge was program implementation because of the vast size and diversity of the PA dairy industry. This continues to be a challenge, but is one which is now less formidable because of the improved communication mechanisms.*

*Another early challenge was bringing together the wide range of industry stakeholder organizations, many of which competed to be the single dairy industry leader. Since the Center's establishment, the dairy industry has become much more unified, and is making great progress toward its collaborative goals.*

22. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

- a. *The Center has grown and changed in many ways:*
  - i. *Multiple programs originally all managed by one person, now have their own managers / facilitators (i.e. Profit Teams / Target Teams, DART, Communications / Promotion, and the Task Force Committees).*
  - ii. *The Center now communicates and collaborates successfully with all the major Pennsylvania dairy organizations, eliminating much of the duplication of efforts and programs of the past.*
  - iii. *The Center has consolidated dairy resources and programs related to dairy profitability and economic development.*
  - iv. *Program staff has grown from one to five.*

23. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

- a. *Pennsylvania is a very rural state with the dairy industry present in all but the most urban areas. In a state where the dairy industry is a significantly weaker economic driver, it may be difficult to get the broad-based public support at all levels for such an entity.*
- b. *Almost no other state has as diverse (i.e. size and type of operations, social and geographic differences) an industry as Pennsylvania. PA's success can be replicated, as mentioned above by other states in the region. As a direct result of the Center's success, the Northeast Dairy Leadership Team was created by a Memorandum of Understanding between the PA, NY, and VT Departments of Agriculture.*
- c. *As a result of the Center's success, several other PA industries have worked with the Department of Agriculture to establish similar task forces for fruit and beef and the Center for Beef Excellence.*