Plans For Grant Money For Dairy Producers

MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) — Grants up to \$1,500 are available to eligible dairy producers through the Business Planning Assistance Program of the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders. A special grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is allowing the program to continue beyond its inaugural year.

The goal of the Business Planning Assistance Program (BPAP) is to encourage and stimulate the development of business and strategic plans for dairy producers. Planning for the future is vital to a successful dairy operation, and often requires the services of a professional.

Participants in the BPAP must be existing or start-up dairy farms within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and must be accepted into the program. Proceeds from the grant may be used only to cover the cost of having the professional services necessary to assist the applicant in evaluating a Pennsylvania dairy farm business.

Approved services could in-

clude the preparation of a feasibility study or business plan, managerial services, or other services associated with planning and business management. Ineligible services include: routine accounting and tax preparation, feed ration development, crop services, or other production-related areas.

The initial funding for the Business Planning Assistance Program came from a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, matched by dairy industry contributions.

To date, 19 business plans

have been completed for a total grant support of over \$25,000 paid to producers in the state. Although the BPAP can provide 75 percent of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$1,500, the actual amount of the funds awarded to any applicant is based on factors such as viability of the project, economic impact, and fund availability. Successful applicants will be required to contribute at least 25 percent of the total project costs from their farm business.

Any producer interested in applying for the Business Planning

Assistance Program should contact N. Alan Bair at 777 West Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057, or by calling (717) 948-6328.



Americans Celebrate Farm-City Week (Continued from Page A20)

does not just come from the grocery store; that the cotton in our clothing was grown in a field," Hemphill noted.

"Urban folks need to have a better understanding of the challenges facing farmers and ranchers. At the same time, our agricultural producers need to recognize that our urban consumers are partners and that we all enjoy the safest and most abundant food supply in the world."

National Farm-City Week was established in 1955 through Kiwanis International as an effort to maintain farm-city relations as America became more urbanized and the farm population began shrinking. Today there are Farm-City organizations in 49 states, driven primarily through extension offices and local Farm Bureaus. The role of the Council is to coordinate national promotion of Farm-City Week.

"Despite the fact that we have only around 2 million active farmers, on a national scale more than 24 million people today work in the food and fiber system," Hemphill ex-plained. "These include the producers, the transporters, the processors, wholesalers and retailers - literally from the farmer who grows it, to the waitress who serves it and the clerk who sells it."

Earlier this year country music entertainer Louise Mandrell put her support behind the Farm-City effort by becoming honorary chairman of the Council.

Although Mandrell and her famous sisters grew up in the Los Angeles area, she is quick to note that she now lives on a 500-acre beef farm near Pigeon Forge, Tenn.







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