

Business Planning Assistance Program Refueled

MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) — Thanks to a renewed grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Business Planning Assistance Program (BPAP) will continue through 2003. BPAP is administered by the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders.

BPAP is a grant-supported program designed to stimulate the development of business and strategic plans for dairy producers in Pennsylvania similar to those used in other industries. Currently, BPAP has additional support from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The program is under the direction of Alan Bair, facilitator of the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders.

To encourage producers to build and implement a business plan for their venture, BPAP can cover up to 75 percent of eligible costs of having an independent specialist evaluate the farm business. Eligible services include preparation of a feasibility study or business plan, managerial services or other services associated with planning and business management. The program does not cover services such as routine accounting and tax preparation, feed ration development, crop services, or other production-related areas.

The program's maximum award to one business is \$1,500. The actual amount a business receives is contingent upon the approval of the project. Once approved, the actual amount of funds dispersed to the business is based on the viability of the project, the project's economic impact and availability of funds. Applicants are required to match 25 percent of the total project costs.

At the time of application, producers interested in the program are provided a list of professional business consultants who perform the types of services covered by the Business Planning Assistance Program. Since the program's inception, that list has grown from five consultants to 21.

Since 1999, 35 total BPAP projects have been completed in the state, paying out \$46,289.25. Thirty-four of these were funded by the PDA grant.

If you are a producer interested in the Business Planning Assistance Program, or a consultant interested in being included on the list, provided to participants, please contact Michelle Jaymes-Parks at (717) 948-6609 or mmj113@psu.edu.

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