



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**APPLICATION PROCESS NOW OPEN FOR UP TO \$1 MILLION IN INNOVATION GRANTS
FOR CALIFORNIA DAIRY PRODUCERS, PROCESSORS AND CO-PACKERS**

Fourth Round of Dairy Business Innovation Initiative Funding Available From Pacific Coast Coalition

Tracy, Calif. – January 25, 2024 – California producers, processors and co-packers are invited to apply for funding for innovation projects and supporting equipment as part of the fourth round of grants recently announced by the Pacific Coast Coalition’s Dairy Business Innovation Initiative (PCC-DBII), hosted by California State University Fresno. More than \$4 million will be awarded through the initiative.

The PCC-DBII will award funding to assist with innovative dairy product development, production, marketing, and distribution. Dr. Susan Pheasant, Director of the Institute for Food and Agriculture at California State University, Fresno, and who serves as Pacific Coast Coalition Director, said grants will range from \$50,000 to \$1 million. Application forms and submission details are available at <https://www.dairypcc.net/>.

“This grant initiative continues to offer major opportunities to California processors to expand their operators”, said John Talbot, CEO of the California Milk Advisory Board. “The large grant pool serves both larger processors and smaller and even farmstead operations with everything from new-to-market projects or development of value-added new products, testing new processes and evaluating feasibility of packaging innovations.”

CMAB’s California Dairy Innovation Center (CDIC), a major partner in the Coalition, has resources to guide qualified California dairy businesses to take advantage of this opportunity. Information and assistance is available by contacting Veronique Lagrange, Director of the CDIC at vlagrange@cmab.net. Furthermore, to support applicants, the Pacific Coast Coalition will host “office hours” via Zoom on February 8th at 4:00 p.m. This will serve as a time to inform applicants about the funding opportunities and answer any questions businesses may have as they are preparing their applications. To sign up and receive additional information, Dr. Pheasant may be contacted at spheasant@csufresno.edu.

Funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, DBII program funded initiatives focus on product, process and packaging innovation and the Pacific Coast Coalition focuses on nine goals:

1. Developing new dairy value-added products, including among others, culturally diverse and ethnic value-added dairy products to meet evolving consumer trends in the region.
2. Adapting current dairy products and creating new value-added products to meet evolving consumer “wants,” to meet both domestic and export demand trends.
3. Developing new product lines and expanding the dairy product portfolio to meet domestic and/or export demand for fresh milk and milk products.
4. Expanding milk usage beyond food and drink, for example packaging/films, edible products for companion animals, cosmetics, and other high-value segments.
5. Adding value to milk by increasing its intrinsic value through differentiation production system/feed additives for nutritional enhancement, and fractionation of components.
6. Adopting alternative processing technologies for value-added dairy products, optimization, and/or recovery of high-value co-streams to increase the profitability of the dairy sector.
7. Creating future opportunities for value-added ingredients and nutritional powders, milk fat products, and specialty blends, and decreasing the dependence on commodity markets.
8. Developing sustainability leadership through innovation in packaging, processing efficiencies, reduced losses/waste, and novel uses of co-products (net-zero dairy processing plants).
9. Extending awareness and consumption of higher value dairy processing products through communications, strategic planning, marketing plans, and expanding hands-on agritourism.

Grants are available to anyone operating a dairy farm or dairy processing plant in California, and focus on product, process, and packaging innovation for dairy manufacturing. A supplemental application is available for co-packers as part of this fourth round of grants. Proposals can include requests for funding for qualified equipment, feasibility studies, innovation in packaging, as well as training of the workforce.ⁱ This is a reimbursement program with applicants reimbursed upon presentation of invoices/receipts for approved projects. All successful applicants will be expected to start spending within 60 days of the official start date once award paperwork is completed.

The CDIC’s Steering Committee, which includes representatives of California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Research Foundation, California Milk Advisory Board, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Dairy Management Inc., California State University, Fresno, Hilmar Cheese, Leprino Foods, and UC Davis assisted in the thorough review process, as well as recommended funding of previous applications, based on objective criteria. A list of previous awards is available at <https://www.dairypcc.net/grant-winners/>.

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About the California Dairy Innovation Center

The California Dairy Innovation Center (CDIC) coordinates pre-competitive research and educational training in collaboration with industry, check-off programs, and research/academic institutions in support of a common set of innovation and productivity goals. The CDIC is guided by a Steering Committee that includes California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Research Foundation, California Milk Advisory Board, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Dairy Management Inc., Fresno State University, Hilmar Cheese, Leprino Foods, and UC Davis. More info at: <https://www.cdic.net/>

About the Pacific Coast Coalition Dairy Business Initiative (PCC-DBII)

The PCC-DBII is funded through the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service and hosted by California State University, Fresno in collaboration with Cal Poly Humboldt, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Chapman University, Chico State, Oregon State University, UC Davis, Washington State University, and the California Dairy Innovation Center. For more information: <https://www.dairypcc.net>.

ⁱ Additional information on the (a) program and (b) allowable expenses is available at: (a) <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/dbi> (b) <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/DBISpecificTermsandConditions.pdf>