

Value-Added Dairy Professional Development Scholarship Program Guidelines

Released August 16, 2022

Overview

Through USDA Dairy Business Innovation Initiative resources, UT Extension is pleased to provide opportunities to value-added dairy producers or key personnel in Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee to participate in a premier professional development opportunity. Selected individuals will be reimbursed up to \$3,000 to help defray registration and selected travel expenses to attend the 2023 NAFDMA Agritourism Convention and Expo in Austin, Texas and vicinity February 3-7, 2023. The conference and expo provide opportunities to producers to improve direct farm marketing operations through educational sessions, farm tours and networking events.

Learn more about the NAFDMA Agritourism Convention and Expo as information becomes available at www.nafdma.com.

Eligibility Requirements

Owners, managers or key personnel of the following operation types located in Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee are eligible to apply:

1. Existing value-added dairy (cattle, sheep or goat) operations producing and marketing value-added dairy products such as fluid milk, butter, cheese, ice cream, yogurt, soaps, lotions, other cosmetics, etc. If products for human consumption are being produced, the operation must be a licensed dairy product manufacturer.
2. Operations working toward becoming licensed dairy product manufacturer within the next 12 months.

Benefits and Requirements

- Up to \$3,000 will be reimbursed to scholarship recipients following the conference in accordance with University of Tennessee travel policy.
- Recipients will be required to attend a pre-conference orientation webinar and meet and greet event during the convention to help them get the most out of the experience.
- Recipients may be asked to share lessons learned through the conference during an educational webinar for other producers and industry partners.
- Conference-related expenses eligible for reimbursement include:
 - Conference registration – conference sessions, farm tours, and trade show, etc.
 - Lodging: Lodging will be reimbursed. For hotels or other non-conference accommodations, reimbursement will be at federal conus rates for the location of the stay. Questions about lodging reimbursement rates can be directed to Kim Giorgio at kagiorgio@utk.edu.
 - Lesser of mileage or economy airfare (Current mileage reimbursement rate is \$0.625 per mile) to the conference hotel.
 - Transportation between the airport and conference hotel, if needed.
 - Parking fees (airport or hotel).
- NAFDMA membership fees and meals are not reimbursable, although most meals are expected to be included in conference registration.

- Recipients are responsible for registering for the conference and making hotel and travel reservations. Early registration is highly encouraged as the event often sells out.
- Recipients must attend and participate in the conference in order to be eligible for reimbursement.
- Reimbursement request must be submitted by February 28, 2023. Instructions for submitting reimbursement requests will be provided to recipients just prior to the conference. Reimbursements will be issued through the University of Tennessee and take approximately two weeks once all the appropriate documentation is submitted. (The sooner you submit the necessary paperwork, the sooner you will receive reimbursement.)

Application Process

Complete the brief application form online at tiny.utk.edu/scholarship. The scholarship selection committee may begin evaluating applicants on September 9, 2022. Scholarship recipients will be notified via the email address provided in their application once selections are made.

The application requests contact information and for applicants to briefly describe:

- Their existing or developing value-added dairy operation
- Their role within the value-added dairy operation
- How they expect this opportunity will help them improve their operation
- An estimate of expenses that will likely be submitted for reimbursement (example provided to right.)

I expect to request reimbursement for \$3,000 for the following estimated expenses:

1. Registration for complete convention for NAFDMA members - \$1,195
2. Mileage to/from airport (100 miles at \$0.625 per mile) = \$62.50
3. Airfare from Nashville, TN to Austin, TX = \$400
4. Airport/hotel transportation = \$75
5. Lodging (\$169 per night, estimate 20% taxes and fees, 6 nights) = \$1,217
6. Airport Parking (\$15 per day * 7 days) = \$105

Total expected expenses = \$3,054.50

Selection of Scholarship Recipients

Priority of selection will be given to existing, permitted value-added dairy operations, if permitting is applicable. Efforts will be made to select one or more recipients from each state (Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee), representatives from as many operations as possible, and different species of dairy livestock (cattle, sheep, goats). Scholarships will be limited to one per farm/business.

Questions?

Contact Megan Bruch Leffew at mleffew@utk.edu or Hal Pepper at hal.pepper@utk.edu or either by calling 931-486-2777.



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