



Funding Available to Increase Energy Efficiency

By News Editor

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The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy® — established by dairy producers in 2008 to foster industry-wide innovation and efficiencies — urges dairy producers interested in cutting on-farm energy costs to contact their local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office. Funding is available right now to help producers address on-farm energy use and increase efficiency.

“One of the goals of the Innovation Center Sustainability team is to work with state and local organizations to connect dairy producers with the energy and cost-saving opportunities that are immediately available,” said Barbara O’Brien, president of the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy and senior executive vice president of Dairy Management Inc.™, which manages the dairy checkoff on behalf of the nation’s farmers. “While initiatives vary across the country, all regions offer assistance to offset the cost of farm energy audits as well as incentive and rebate programs to make equipment upgrades and retrofits more affordable.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding is available through NRCS for farm energy audits and equipment upgrades (available to those with qualifying audits). Producers should act now.

The first national application cutoff is Feb. 3. More details can be found through local NRCS field offices. An on-farm energy audit, also known as an Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP), is a vital decision-making tool. An energy audit can identify improvements that could reduce energy use by 10 to 35 percent — most often in areas such as lighting, milk cooling, ventilation, vacuum pumps and electric water heating.

Saving energy directly translates to cost savings and improved profitability for dairy operations. On average dairy producers spend \$40 per cow per year on electricity. Improved energy efficiency can mean \$4 to \$14 savings per cow. This can translate into thousands of dollars per year.

Producers can learn about financial assistance opportunities in one of three ways: 1) call an energy expert at 800-732-1399; 2) contact a local NRCS field office; or 3) use the Innovation Center's easy-to-use, [SaveEnergy web tool](#).

Source: [Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy®](#)

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