

Sent on behalf of NAIDC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cathy Williams Contest Chair, Southern Regional Dairy Challenge

Phone: (225) 578-4574

Email: CWilliams@agcenter.lsu.edu

Louisiana State University hosts Southern Regional Dairy Challenge

The eighth Annual Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, which ran November 17-19, 2013, attracted 51 students from 11 universities and colleges to the event hosted by the Louisiana State University.

“The Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, in a new weekday format, continued to provide the students an opportunity to practice their dairy management knowledge, as well as leadership and communication skills, in a "real world" setting. All students evaluated the same farm, which was an excellent family owned operation in southeast Louisiana. An added benefit of the new weekday format was the interaction with more industry representatives than ever before, thus providing a tremendous networking opportunity for the students as they look toward a future in the dairy industry,” says contest planning committee chair Cathy Williams of Louisiana State University.

Dairy Challenge is an innovative competition developed by industry and university professionals, which exposes students to opportunities in a vibrant dairy industry. Working in four- or five-person, mixed-university teams, students at the Southern Regional Dairy Challenge assessed all aspects of a working dairy farm and presented recommendations to judges and participating farm families.

This year’s contest in Baton Rouge, Louisiana attracted students from Alabama A&M, Clemson University, Eastern Kentucky University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, Mississippi State University, North Carolina A&T, North Carolina State University, Virginia Tech and Western Kentucky University.

After they arrived, students joined their new teammates and had the opportunity to learn more about one another in a fun team building activity. They then began learning about the dairy they would be analyzing.

The next day, students had an in-depth walk-through of the host dairy. The host farm for the competition was Clifford and Patty Champlin of Champlin Dairy Farm in, Loranger, LA.

Following the farm visit, students met as teams and developed questions for the herd owners. After the question-and-answer session, teams developed recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management. They also had the opportunity to talk to dairy experts to answer any questions they had. The next day, each team gave a 20-minute presentation of their recommendations to farm owners and a panel of judges - dairy producers, veterinarians, farm finance specialists, and industry personnel.

Judges ranked the teams, choosing two teams as 1st Place winners. The individuals who comprised these teams are: Clay Phelps-Virginia Tech, Shawna Blau-Mississippi State University, Meghan Grone-University of Kentucky, Casey Lucas-Clemson University, Roxanne Seltzer-Virginia Tech, Taylor Wright-North Carolina State University, Caitlin Conway-University of Florida and Kimberly Pierce-Western Kentucky University.

Throughout the event, student participants had several opportunities to network with industry professionals. Several agribusiness sponsors joined in an Innovation Fair, showcasing their products, services, full-time jobs and internships. The students also had a unique opportunity to listen to panelist comprised of industry leaders discuss their careers in the dairy industry. All students also participated in a tour of the Louisiana State University Dairy Research Farm and were able to see the research being conducted on the farm.

About Dairy Challenge

NAIDC is an innovative two-day competition for students representing dairy science programs at North American universities. Its mission is to facilitate education, communication and an exchange of ideas among students, agribusiness, dairy producers, and universities that enhances the development of the dairy industry and its leaders.

The 2014 national contest – and the 2nd annual Dairy Challenge Academy - will be April 3-5 in Fort Wayne, IN. In addition, four regional events are held each year. Find details at www.dairychallenge.org.

###



Photo caption 1: *Southern Regional Dairy Challenge participants group picture on the farm.*



Photo caption 2: *Students on the Genex team earning First Place honors: (left to right) Shawna Blau-Mississippi State University, Casey Lucas-Clemson University, Meghan Grone-University of Kentucky and Clay Phelps-Virginia Tech*



Photo caption 3: *Students on the Dairy Farmers of America earning First Place honors: (left to right) Roxanne Seltzer-Virginia Tech, Caitlin Conway-University of Florida, Taylor Wright-North Carolina State University, and Kimberly Pierce-Western Kentucky University.*