



Dear Coaches,

On behalf of the National Program Committee of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, it is our privilege to invite your university to participate in the 14th Annual Dairy Challenge and the 3rd Annual Dairy Challenge Academy. These events will be held in Syracuse, New York April 9 – 11, 2015 and hosted by the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge Committee.

The **North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge Contest** offers a two-day competition that enables four-person teams to evaluate a well-managed dairy farm business and then recommend management enhancements to a panel of judges comprised of industry and academic professionals. We believe this to be the premier dairy event in the country for undergraduate students and work hard on behalf of the students to support the program.

The **Dairy Challenge Academy** will run in conjunction with the national contest. The Academy gives its students an intensive program using the educational component of the Dairy Challenge contest without the competition.

Contest Participation:

- The contest is limited to the first 32 teams who register and teams are limited to 4 students that have not previously participated in the National Contest. Completed entries will receive priority by date, time of receipt, and previous participation in the contest.
- If we do not meet the 32 team maximum, aggregate teams will be formed.
 - If you do not have enough students to create a team, please complete an entry for those interested in being placed on an aggregate team.
 - If you have a team and are interested in possibly having a fifth student participate on an aggregate team, please include their information on the entry form as instructed.

In the event the contest fills and aggregate students are not placed, these students may request to transfer their registration to the Academy by indicating such on their aggregate registration. *Because of the uncertainty of their participation status, the entry fee is noted as "FREE" for now. Payment should be made later once participation is confirmed.*

- The rules of the competition including eligibility are available online at www.dairychallenge.org, click on "National."
- To help you prepare your students for the contest, you may review materials from past events to familiarize yourselves with the content and layout. Go to <http://www.dairychallenge.org/login.php>
Password: coach

Academy Participation:

- The Academy is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors from 4-year dairy programs, as well as undergraduates from community colleges and technical schools.
- The program is being offered to the first 200 students who register. Schools may register up to 6 students per school, but additional alternates may be identified in case we have fewer than 200 students.
- Completed entries will receive priority by receipt (date and time) and previous regional or national participation if size limits are reached.

- Requirements for student participation are as follows:
 - *A Dairy Challenge Academy participant must be a student in a North American educational institution that offers classes that have emphasis in dairy production.*
 - *Participants must be enrolled in a program of study to meet the requirements for a bachelor's degree or be enrolled in a dairy/animal degree or certificate granting program and have completed one year or equivalent of course work. Students enrolled in graduate or professional studies programs (with or without a bachelor's degree) are not eligible.*
 - *A student is ineligible to participate if he/she has (1) competed in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge National Contest, or (2) been an employee or paid consultant of any agricultural organization or service for which his/her duties included on-farm dairy consulting (excluding internships).*
 - *A contestant may only participate/compete in a total of two regional contests, one Dairy Challenge Academy, and one National Dairy Challenge Contest.*

- These requirements allow the Dairy Challenge Academy to be a meaningful educational experience for students and also to assure Dairy Challenge sponsors that we are involving students with potential interest and relevance to the industry.

New this year:

- ✓ Registration fees have increased to **\$100 for each Contest and Academy student**. This increase will help defray the costs of additional hotel nights, meals, and added programming expenses. This is the first increase Dairy Challenge has requested since the contest began. At the same time, our cost to provide this program has grown to approximately \$650 per student. We continue to receive tremendous sponsor support, and we hope that this increase will be viewed as an opportunity for students to become vested in this educational program as well, both now and in the future.

- ✓ Registration is now online (http://dairychallenge.org/national_contest.php). This is the only method of registration. There is a single form to be used by schools for Contest and Academy entries. Schools have the option to pay with credit card or by check.

- ✓ Coaches *do not* have to collect and submit student forms. This year, students will be responsible for completing a single form online - a **Student Information** form. Students must submit this form by March 6. This form is available on the Dairy Challenge web site at http://www.dairychallenge.org/national_contest.php. The signing of the Contestant Liability Waiver, Contest Information Release Waiver, and the Contestant Honor Code will be handled on site at the event.

- ✓ Students will be allowed to use the Internet during the contest preparation time and throughout the Academy. As such, in addition to the 2 computers we are asking each school to bring (but these will not need to be checked in with IT), students are allowed to bring their own computers for their personal use. There are several changes relative to the computer requirements. **Please read the Computer Requirements document posted on the web site before you travel to the contest.** Use of cell phones or similar devices with recording mechanisms will not be allowed during the contest.

Registration:

The Entry Form (single form for Contest and Academy) is online at

http://www.dairychallenge.org/national_contest.php. You may pay by credit card or check.

- **Deadline for entry: February 20, 2015.** Completed entries will receive priority by date, time of receipt, and previous participation in the Contest or Academy.

- **Entry Fee:** \$100 per student. Entry fees are not refundable after the February 20 deadline.

Travel Information:

Hotel: The student/coach hotel is the Holiday Inn Syracuse/Liverpool, 441 Electronics Parkway, Liverpool, NY 13088, Phone: 315/457-1122, Website: www.staysyracuse.com. Complete information on housing including reservations will be sent with your entry confirmation. This will also be posted on our national contest web page at http://www.dairychallenge.org/national_contest.php. **Reservations should be made only after you receive a confirmation from Dairy Challenge.** Each school will be given an allocation for number of student rooms that will be paid for by the contest. Schools are responsible for the cost of the coaches' rooms.

Thursday program: On Thursday, a full day of programming is being offered that includes a morning educational farm tour and an afternoon seminar with NY industry and young producer panels. If your school is participating, you may wish to arrive in Syracuse on Wednesday night. Those participating should plan to leave the hotel by 8:00 AM, as Thursday's program begins at the farm at 9:20 AM. Participants will receive a lunch at the farm to eat while driving to the hotel for the afternoon seminar starting at 2:00 PM. Please indicate on the attached Entry Form your plans for participating in Thursday's activity - you must register in advance.

- To help you plan your travel, the Thursday farm tour will be held at Spring Hope Dairy, 2850 County Road 4, Stanley, NY 14561.
- Schools are responsible for their own transportation to the farm on Thursday. We encourage carpooling on Thursday to minimize the number of vehicles traveling to the farm.
- NAIDC will pay for Wednesday night student rooms in Syracuse for those schools needing it. We also anticipate that some schools will find it more convenient to travel directly to the farm on Thursday morning. Those schools should plan to arrive at the farm by 9:20 AM.

Contest schools not participating in Thursday's farm tour and seminar should arrive in Syracuse **no later than 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9.** Registration will be open 4:00 – 5:00 PM. Dinner is planned for 4:30-6:30 PM, followed by data distribution and review of contest procedures beginning at 8:00 p.m.

Schools should plan to depart either after the banquet on Saturday, April 11 or on Sunday, April 12.

Travel assistance: Stipend amounts are available to contest schools that need travel support, and are based on distance to the contest site. Travel assistance is not being offered to Academy participants. This year, contest teams that are flying may receive up to \$600 of travel reimbursement for the entire team. Teams that are driving and need travel support may receive up to \$600 of travel reimbursement (round trip) at \$0.50 per mile for the entire team. *New this year:* Any funds remaining in our travel budget after these allocations are made will be divided among the Contest teams that traveled the farthest and need funding the most.

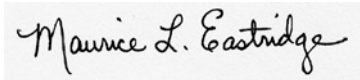
For those planning to fly to the Dairy Challenge, the nearest airport is Syracuse Hancock International Airport. For a list of airlines and rental car agencies that serve that airport, go to: <http://www.syrairport.org/>. The Holiday Inn Syracuse, only 7 minutes from the airport, offers free shuttle to and from the airport and other nearby destinations.

Meals

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided for one Contest coach and/or one Academy coach, each Academy participant and Contest team member on the days of April 9-11.
- Should you have an individual needing a special diet, it is important that you include this information on the online Contest entry form so we can alert the catering staff.
- Teams that bring more than one Contest coach and/or more than one Academy coach are asked to pay the full price for the additional meals (\$170) when completing the entry form.

Please complete the online entry form at http://www.dairychallenge.org/national_contest.php by Friday, **February 20, 2015**. Completed entries will receive priority by date and time of receipt and previous participation in the Contest or Academy if size limits are reached. A confirmation letter with more details including housing information will be sent upon receipt of your registration material and after February 21st. Please remember, students should complete the Student Information form at http://www.dairychallenge.org/national_contest.php by **Friday, March 6, 2015**. We look forward to your participation in this exciting and innovative contest.

Sincerely,



Maurice Eastridge
Program Committee Chair



Molly Kelley
Executive Director

Enclosures:

- Tips for using the new online Entry Form (below)
- Contest Schedule

Tips for using the new online registration form at http://www.dairychallenge.org/national_contest.php:

- One form is being used for both Contest and Academy entries. All entries should be submitted using this form.
- If you plan to pay by credit card: Once you have entered the number of Registration Types (Contest Coach, Contest Student, Academy Coach, etc.), click on the green REGISTER button (see Image 1 below). Upon completion of your registration information, you will be automatically redirected to another page with requests for additional information and to our Paypal site where you can enter your credit card information. You do not have to have a PayPal account in order to pay using this option.
- If you plan to pay by check: Once you have entered the number of Registration Types (Contest Coach, Contest Student, Academy Coach, etc.), click on the “show other payment options” below the green REGISTER button. You will then be given the option to PAY OFFLINE by check. Please send your check by **February 20, 2015** payable to:

North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge
3310 Latham Drive, Madison, WI. 53713
Attn: Ann Marie Magnochi
PH: 608/224-0400 FX: 608/224-0300 Email: amagnochi@wdexpo.com

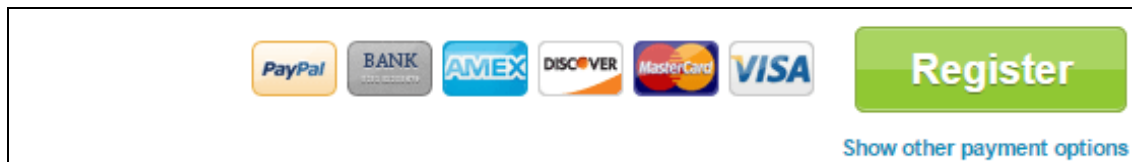


Image 1

- For schools that are sending one coach for both Contest and Academy, please enter that coach's information under **both** Contest and Academy (there is a “copy” option for your convenience).
- If you have **additional** students beyond the initial allotment who are interested in either the Contest (as an aggregate) or the Academy, please include their information when registering. We will contact you after February 21 if space is available to add additional students. You will notice that no payment is required now for these students - the registration for additional students is listed as “Free.” Payment arrangements can be made once their participation is confirmed.
- If contest space doesn't allow for aggregate students, please indicate on their entry information if that student would like to be considered for the Academy.
- If you have any questions, please contact Ann Marie Magnochi (amagnochi@wdexpo.com, 608-224-0400) or Molly Kelley (naidcmjk@aol.com, 217-684-3007)