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119 Students from 14 Colleges Participate in 11th Annual Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge®

Plattsburgh, NY, November 4, 2013 – William H. Miner Agricultural Institute hosted a successful Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge that drew 119 students from 12 northeast colleges and two Canadian universities to Plattsburgh, NY, October 31-November 2, 2013. This event marked the 11th annual Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge which is an innovative, three-day educational competition designed to prepare students for careers in the dairy industry.

Working in mixed-university teams of five students, contestants assessed all aspects of a working dairy farm, including facilities, nutrition, financials, reproduction, animal health and much more. Students collaborated on a 20-minute team presentation that detailed their observations and suggestions to a panel of judges and participating farm families. Teams were ranked as platinum, gold or silver based on how well their evaluations matched the judges' assessment of the dairy operation.

The objective of Dairy Challenge is to create a real-life situation that stresses the importance of teamwork and professionalism. Industry chair Brett Denny of Vermont DHIA explained, "Not only does the Dairy Challenge teach technical knowledge, it excels in helping students develop people skills."

New York farms evaluated at the 2013 competition included Rusty Creek Farm, Chazy, NY; Rovers Farm, Chazy, NY; and Hidden View Farm, Champlain, NY. All teams also participated in educational workshops at the Miner Institute and attended an industry career fair. Team-building and fun activities were held throughout the weekend to encourage networking among students and dairy industry sponsors.

First place teams, which were named after top sponsors of the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge, included: Shur-Gain USA, Inc.; Elanco Animal Health; and New England Jersey Breeders Association. The Shur-Gain USA, Inc. team was also recognized with Don Rogers honors, indicating the highest honors possible.

The 2014 Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge will be hosted by the Delaware Valley College in Pennsylvania. For more information about next year's contest, please contact Bruce Richards of Delaware Valley College at bruce.richards@delval.edu.

To become a sponsor, contact Jan Bitter of Farm Credit East at 800-392-3276 or jan.bitter@farmcrediteast.com. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Contributing sponsor listings are available at www.dairychallenge.org.

The Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge is under the guidance and support of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) which was established in April 2002 as a management contest to incorporate evaluation of all aspects of a specific dairy business.

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Photo caption 1: Participants, sponsors and planning committee members of the 2013 Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge.

Photo caption 2: Taylor Merry (left) of Alfred State College and Brigham Reese (right) of Vermont Technical College review all areas of Rovers Farm including the facilities.

Photo caption 3: Cow comfort is one of many areas assess by Dairy Challenge teams. Noah Ives (left) of SUNY Cobleskill and Rocco Cunningham (right) of Cornell University measure stalls at Rusty Creek Farm in Chazy, NY.

Photo caption 4: A group of students asks questions to Lance Rovers (far right) of Rovers Farm in Chazy, NY.

Photo caption 5: Students on Shur-Gain USA, Inc. team earned first place and Don Rogers honors. Front row (left to right): Laura Bond, The Ohio State University-ATI; Elizabeth Remick, University of Vermont; Vanessa Robinson, University of Guelph; back row: Eric Carey, Cornell University; Grady Ballard, Morrisville State College.