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Tomorrow's Dairy Leaders Converge in New York for 2015 Dairy Challenge®

Liverpool, NY, April 14, 2015 – Excitement for the future of the dairy industry was evident among attendees of the national Dairy Challenge, held April 9-11, 2015 in Syracuse, NY. The event brought together 274 college students to improve skills, network and learn about careers and industry innovation. Students represented 38 colleges in 29 states and three Canadian provinces.

“Dairy Challenge is a premier dairy industry event, providing education, communication and networking among students, producers and agribusiness and university personnel,” explained Barry Putnam of Cargill Animal Nutrition and the Northeast Dairy Challenge committee.

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC) allows dairy students to apply theory and learning on a real-world dairy farm while working as part of a team.

In Syracuse, two programs ran concurrently – the 14th annual Dairy Challenge contest and the third annual Dairy Challenge Academy. The events were coordinated by the NAIDC Board of Directors and the Northeast Dairy Challenge committee.

The 2015 contest included 32 universities, each with four students on their university team competing for awards. The Academy provided interactive training in dairy farm evaluation for 146 students, generally underclassmen at four-year universities or students in two-year dairy programs. Academy participants were divided into smaller groups, mixing students from various colleges, and their work was guided by Academy Advisors – agribusiness volunteers and academic professionals.

Dairy Challenge Applies Learning to a Real-world Dairy

Over its 14-year history, Dairy Challenge has helped more than 4,700 students prepare for careers in the dairy industry, dairy production and veterinary medicine.

“Dairy Challenge provides an outstanding opportunity for our students to integrate what they learn in classes with real-world situations, use problem-solving skills and network with leaders in the dairy industry,” said Devin Albrecht, of Prairie State/Select Sires and NAIDC board chairman.



Above: Dairy Challenge contest and Academy students join together for a tour and group photo at Spring Hope Dairy.



Left: Kirk Sattazahn (right) of Select Sire Power serves as an Academy Advisor for the 2015 Dairy Challenge Academy, where students work in mixed-university teams and conduct a dairy farm business analysis.



Right: Dairy Challenge Academy students tour Venture Farms LLC in Tully, NY.

The three-day event began with a tour at Spring Hope Dairy in Clifton Springs, NY, where students, industry specialists and educators worked together at learning stations on milking protocols, reproduction, feeding management and other areas. The day also included two panel discussions. One panel was a group of processors that provided a perspective on their businesses and how they interact with producers. Processor panelists included Mike Davis of Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc., Kevin Ellis of Cayuga Milk Ingredients, Terra Jackson of Chobani, Tom Murray of Muranda Cheese Company and Amie Thomas of Dairy Farmers of America. Next, a panel of young producers shared insights on starting or entering a dairy operation. Producer panelists were Ryan Clark of Windy Lane Jerseys in Tyrone, Pa., Jordan Fisher of Mapleview Dairy LLC in Madrid, NY; Luke Getty of Ideal Dairy Farms in Hudson Falls, NY; and Jessica Slaymaker of Slaymaker Farm in Mansfield, Pa. The day concluded with each group receiving data from a dairy to analyze and provide recommendations for improvement.



Above: Spring Hope Dairy in Clifton Springs, NY hosted a tour of the operation along with learning stations for contest and Academy students.



Above: Four younger farmers shared their experiences of starting or entering a dairy operation. Panelists included Ryan Clark of Tyrone, Pa., Jordan Fisher of Madrid, NY, Luke Getty of Hudson Falls, NY and Jessica Slaymaker of Mansfield, Pa.

Day Two included a thorough farm visit to the assigned dairy and question-answer session with farm owners. All groups – in both contest and Academy – developed recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, cow comfort and financial management.

On Day Three, students presented their recommendations, visited with sponsor companies at the Career and Innovation Fair, and heard

Corporate Technology Presentations from top-level NAIDC sponsors. These talks were presented by:

- Amanda Wright, DVM, Animal Health International
- Chris Canale, Ph.D., Cargill Animal Nutrition
- Nick Hamauer, Cooperative Resources International
- Corey Kayhart, Farm Credit East
- Jeff Tikofsky, M.S., Purina Animal Nutrition
- Norm Vincel, Select Sire Power

In the contest, the college team presentations were evaluated by a panel of five judges, including dairy producers, veterinarians, farm finance specialists and agribusiness personnel. All students, coaches, volunteers and sponsors joined together to celebrate at Saturday evening's banquet.

Eight College Teams Earn Top Awards

In the contest, First Place awards were earned by California Polytechnic State University, University of Guelph, University of Tennessee and Washington State University. Each first-place student received a \$200 scholarship.

The team from Cal Poly consisted of Anthony Alamo, Preston Fernandes, Amy McBirney and Russell Pate and was coached by Stan Henderson, Ph.D. Representing University of Guelph was Laura Donkers, Myranda Morrison, Courtney O'Neil and Kevin Reijnen with coaches Mark Carson, Ken Leslie, Ph.D., and John Walton, Ph.D. The University of Tennessee team included Rebecca Davis, Stephanie Nash, Jeanette Peterson and Billy Rochell, coached by Gina Pighetti, Ph.D. Washington State University students were Joseph Britt, Megan Cihak, Landon Macy and Kelby Stadt and was coached by John Swain.



Above: Team members from University of Idaho discuss their management recommendations with the judge panel, which included a farmer, financial expert, veterinarian and other dairy professionals.

The following teams and students were awarded Second Place, with each student earning a \$100 scholarship.

- **Cornell University:** Edward Facer, Kristin King, Amanda Moretti and Meghan Vaill with coaches Mike Van Amburgh, Ph.D., and Betsey Howland
- **University of Illinois:** Alyssa Brodsky, Claire Nkhikhssi, Samantha Ropp and Erik Sheppelman with coaches Filepe Cardoso, Ph.D., and Katie Haerr
- **Oregon State University:** Danielle Bull, Mieke DeJong, Andrea Smaciarz and Rebecca Thomas with coach Jim Krahn
- **The Pennsylvania State University:** Gearet FitzPatrick, Isaac Haagen, Amy Kraus and Evan Snyder with coaches Lisa Holden, Ph.D., Virginia Ishler, Ph.D. and Gabriella Varga, Ph.D.



Above left: Students assess calves at Patterson Farms, Inc. located in Auburn, NY.

Above center: Dairy Challenge participant, Joseph Mulcahy of University of Wisconsin-Madison, reviews milking procedures during the on-farm evaluation.

Above right: Ron Robbins (middle), owner of North Harbor Dairy in Sackets Harbor, NY, poses with team members from the University of New Hampshire.

Total Industry Effort

Six dairy farms opened up their farms for analysis and in exchange, received a wealth of ideas from students and judges. Host farms for the 2015 Dairy Challenge were:

- **North Harbor Dairy**, Sackets Harbor, NY
- **Patterson Farms Inc.**, Auburn, NY
- **Fesko Farms LLC**, Skaneateles, NY
- **Whey Street Dairy LLC**, Cuyler, NY
- **Hourigan's Dairy Farm LLC**, Elbridge, NY
- **Venture Farms LLC**, Tully, NY

“The success of the 2015 Dairy Challenge was possible through tremendous support of the participating dairy farm families in New York; the time and financial support from allied dairy businesses; and dairy food donations by processors. Dairy professionals from across the U.S. assisted as contest judges and Academy advisors,” shared Putnam. “We look forward to hosting the 2016 Dairy Challenge in Syracuse again next year to continue developing tomorrow’s dairy leaders.”

About Dairy Challenge

NAIDC is an innovative event for students in dairy programs at North American post-secondary institutions. Its mission is to develop tomorrow’s dairy leaders and enhance progress of the dairy industry, by providing education, communication and networking among students, producers, and agribusiness and university personnel. Over its 14-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 4,700 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals. The next national event will be April 7-9, 2016 in Syracuse, NY. Four regional events are held in late fall and winter; details are at www.dairychallenge.org.



Above: Earning first place honors at the 2015 North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® were teams from California Polytechnic State University, University of Guelph, University of Tennessee and Washington State University.

First Row Row (L-R) from University of Tennessee: Coach Gina Pighetti, Ph.D., Rebecca Davis, Stephanie Nash, Jeanette Peterson and Billy Rochell.

Second Row Row (L-R) from Washington State University: Landon Macy, Megan Cihak, Kelby Stadt, Joseph Britt and Coach John Swain.

Third Row Row (L-R) from University of Guelph: Coach John Walton, Ph.D., Courtney O’Neil, Myranda Morrison, Laura Donkers, Kevin Reijnen, Coach Mark Carson and Coach Ken Leslie, Ph.D.

Fourth Row Row (L-R) from California Polytechnic State University: Coach Stan Henderson, Ph.D., Preston Fernandes, Amy McBirney, Anthony Alamo and Russell Pate.