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Tomorrow's Dairy Leaders Stormed New York for 2016 Dairy Challenge®

Liverpool, NY, April 12, 2016 – Nearly 250 future leaders of the dairy industry gathered in Syracuse, NY, for the national Dairy Challenge, held April 7-9, 2016. The event brought together 39 colleges from 29 states and three Canadian provinces to learn technical dairy skills, network with other students, and explore industry careers and innovation.

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

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC) allows dairy students to work as a team and apply theory and learning on a real-world dairy farm. In Syracuse, two programs ran concurrently – the 15th annual Dairy Challenge contest and the fourth annual Dairy Challenge Academy. The events were coordinated by the NAIDC Board of Directors and the Northeast Dairy Challenge committee.

The 2016 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 119 students in dairy programs at universities, community colleges or technical schools. Academy participants were divided into smaller groups, mixing students from various colleges, and their work was guided by agribusiness volunteers as Academy Advisors.

Dairy Challenge Applies Learning to a Real-world Dairy

Over its 15-year history, Dairy Challenge has helped more than 5,000 students prepare for careers in the dairy industry, dairy production and veterinary medicine.

“Dairy Challenge provides an opportunity for our students to jump-start their careers by integrating what they learn in the classroom with real challenges facing the industry, all while networking with dairy leaders, and improving their problem-solving skills,” said Owen Bewley, Area Sales Manager of Phibro Animal Health Corporation and NAIDC board chairman.

The three-day event began with a tour at Hemdale Farms, Inc. in Seneca Castle, NY, where students, industry specialists and educators witnessed 19 robotic milking systems in action and worked together at learning stations on reproduction, feeding management, milking protocols, and other key management areas. The day also included two panel discussions. A group of processors provided a perspective on their businesses and how they interact with producers. Processor panelists included Kevin Ellis of Cayuga Marketing and Cayuga Milk Ingredients, Tera Jackson of Chobani, Tom Murray of Muranda Cheese and Skyler Ryll of Dairy Farmers of America. Next, a panel of young producers shared insights on starting and entering a dairy operation. Producer panelists were Dan Durfee, Luke Getty, Dan Hartzell and Meghan Vaill. The day concluded with each group receiving data from a dairy to analyze and provide recommendations for improvement.

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

- Martha Baker, M.S., PAS – Purina Animal Nutrition
- Christopher Canale, PhD – Cargill Animal Nutrition
- Kristi Fiedler – Genex/Cooperative Resources International
- John Lehr – Farm Credit East
- Dave Whitlock – 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, the following teams and students were awarded First Place, with each student receiving a \$200 scholarship.

- **California Polytechnic State University:** Justine DeVries, John Schoneveld, Toni Silva, Christine Sousa and coached by Dr. Stan Henderson and Dr. Julie Huzzey
- **Cornell University:** Josh Landis, Kelsey Neckers, Greg Van Ravenswaay, Colleen Smith and coached by Betsey Howland and Dr. Mike Van Amburgh
- **University of Wisconsin-River Falls:** Brian Fesenmaier, Meghan Connelly, Kyle Rentmeester, Dylan Nelson and coached by Dr. Sylvia Kehoe
- **University of Wisconsin-Madison:** Cody Getschel, Olivia Peter, Elizabeth Endres, Megan Opperman and coached by Theodore Halbach and Dr. David Combs

Teams and students earning Second Place and \$100 student scholarships include:

- **University of Alberta:** Melanie Boros, Casey Morey, Kathleen Murphy, Sarah Pletts and coached by Dr. Masahito Oba
- **University of Guelph:** Shaelyn Prins, Victoria Seip, Sabrina Van Schyndel, Maggie Williamson and coached by Mark Carson, Dr. Trevor Devries and Dr. John Walton
- **University of Idaho:** Kimberly Davenport, Kayla Nelson, Zachary Reynolds, Thomas Vanberkum and coached by Dr. Amin Ahmadzadeh
- **University of Minnesota:** Eric Houdek, Mary Liebenstein, Bret Ott, Wyatt Smith and coached by Dr. Marcia Endres

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 2016 Dairy Challenge were:

- **Black Brook Farms,** Shortsville, NY
- **Fouts Farm LLC,** Cortland, NY
- **McMahon's E-Z Acres,** Homer, NY
- **Tuscarora Dairy LLC,** Chittenango, NY
- **Beck Farms LLC,** Freeville, NY
- **Twin Birch Dairy LLC,** Skaneateles, NY

“The success of the 2016 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. “I know beyond a doubt the industry will rally again to support the 2017 Dairy Challenge in Visalia, CA, next year and make it an even greater success as we 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 15-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 5,000 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals. The next national event will be March 30-April 1, 2017 in Visalia, CA. Four regional events are held in late fall and winter; details are at www.dairychallenge.org.

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PHOTO NOTES

Print quality versions of all photos – plus photos of all participating university teams are posted in the NAIDC website's Media Gallery: <http://www.dairychallenge.org/gallery.php?id=32>

Additional photos are available upon request. Email rsattazahn@agchoice.com with specific photo requests.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

2016 NAIDC - First Place Teams

Caption: Earning first place honors at the 2016 North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® were teams from California Polytechnic State University, Cornell University, University of Wisconsin-River Falls and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

First Row Row (L-R): Dr. Julie Huzzey, coach of California Polytechnic State University; Justine DeVries, California Polytechnic State University; John Schoneveld, California Polytechnic State University; Christine Sousa, California Polytechnic State University; Toni Silva, California Polytechnic State University; Dr. Stan Henderson, coach of California Polytechnic State University; Dr. David Combs, coach of University of Wisconsin-Madison

Second Row Row (L-R): Theodore Halbach, coach of University of Wisconsin-Madison; Dr. Sylvia Kehoe, coach of University of Wisconsin-River Falls; Brian Fensenmaier, University of Wisconsin-River Falls; Meghan Connelly, University of Wisconsin-River Falls; Elizabeth Endres, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Megan Operman, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Kelsey Neckers, Cornell University; Greg Van Ravensway, Cornell University; Dr. Mike Van Amburgh, coach of Cornell University

Third Row Row (L-R): Dylan Nelson, University of Wisconsin-River Falls; Kyle Rentmeester, University of Wisconsin-River Falls; Cody Getschel, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Olivia Peter, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Colleen Smith, Cornell University; Josh Landis, Cornell University; Betsey Howland, coach of Cornell University

2016 NAIDC - Full Group Photo

Caption: Dairy Challenge contest and Academy students join together for a group photo.

2016 NAIDC - Academy Data Review

Caption: Corey Kayhart (standing) of Cargill Animal Nutrition serves as an Academy Advisor for the 2016 Dairy Challenge Academy, where students work in mixed-university teams and conduct a dairy farm business analysis.

2016 NAIDC – Tour at Hemdale Farms

All students toured Hemdale Farms, Inc. as part of the 2016 Dairy Challenge, learning about the operation that has 19 robotic milking systems.

2016 NAIDC - Contest Students at Fouts Farm

Caption: Dairy Challenge students assess all aspects during the on-farm evaluation at Fouts Farm LLC in Cortland, NY.

2016 NAIDC Contest Students Review Heifer Facilities

Caption: Students from South Dakota State University, Maggie Stiles (left) and Brianna Lee (right), review heifer facilities at McMahon's E-Z Acres in Homer, NY.