

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Wisconsin-Madison Dairy Science to Host Expanded Midwest Dairy Challenge®

Madison, Wisconsin December 20, 2016 – University of Wisconsin-Madison will host college dairy students at the Midwest Dairy Challenge, February 8-10, 2017, in Madison, Wisconsin. Dairy Challenge® is a prominent educational event for students planning a career in the dairy industry. One hundred and fourteen dairy students from 12 four-year colleges and six technical schools are expected at the 13th annual Midwest Dairy Challenge.

The Midwest event is one of four regional contests sponsored each year by North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC). These regional contests – plus a national event for about 300 dairy collegiates – are funded through generous support by 130 agribusinesses and dairy producers. Over its 15-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare nearly 5,000 students for careers as dairy owners or managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals.

The 2017 Midwest event is expanded this year, offering the educational and networking opportunity to 40 additional students compared to previous years, due to more college students interested in participation. “The Madison area is blessed with the necessary resources it takes to grow the Midwest contest,” states Ted Halbach, UW-Madison faculty associate in dairy management. “No other university has the number of progressive dairy operations located within a 30-mile radius of campus that we do, and there is a concentration of industry professionals who deliver them their services. Hopefully, a good number of these folks now working in the industry will step forward as volunteers ‘to give back’ to a program that benefitted them as undergrads.”

At Dairy Challenge, each team of students put textbook knowledge to the ultimate test – providing solutions for a dairy. Student participants will be assigned to teams, working with students from other colleges whom they are meeting for the first time. These teams inspect an operating dairy, analyze farm data and interview farm owners. Then they develop recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health and housing to help the farm optimize performance and profitability.

Teams will present their recommendations to farm owners – while being evaluated by a panel of five judges including dairy producers, veterinarians, farm finance specialists and industry personnel. In addition to this consulting competition, students have ample opportunity for networking and education.

Media, sponsors and dairy enthusiasts are invited to the following Midwest Dairy Challenge events at the Madison Concourse Hotel. Please make advance arrangements by contacting Anna Troester, Midwest Dairy Challenge Publicity chair at 563-880-4797 or Amy te Plate-Church at 715-304-7031.

Educational seminars	Wed., Feb. 8	3:00-5:00 p.m.	Student Senate
Community service	Wed., Feb. 8	6:15-6:45 p.m.	Wisconsin Ballroom
Student farm visits	Thurs., Feb. 9	8:00-11:00 a.m.	Two area dairy farms
Student presentations	Fri., Feb. 10	7:00-10:45 a.m.	Conference Room
Student presentations	Fri., Feb. 10	11:30 a.m.-1:45 p.m.	Conference Room
Educational Program	Fri., Feb. 19	8:30-10:00 a.m.	Senate Room AB
Educational Program	Fri., Feb. 19	12:00-1:30 p.m.	Senate Room AB
Industry Innovation Fair	Fri., Feb. 13	8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	Wisconsin Ballroom

"We would not have been able to accomplish such a big task without the help of the regional and national leadership of NAIDC and I am always impressed to see how the industry pulls together to give students interested

in dairy production this tremendous learning and networking opportunity,” concluded Halbach. “I’m privileged to be a part of this effort.”

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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 2017 national event will be March 30-April 1 in Visalia, CA; details are at www.dairychallenge.org .

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