

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Amanda Mitcheltree, Southern Dairy Challenge PR Chair

[akmitcheltree@landolakes.com](mailto:akmitcheltree@landolakes.com) or 724-674-4291

### University of Florida Hosts 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Regional Dairy Challenge

Over 70 students from 16 universities participated in the Southern Regional Dairy Challenge held November 12-14 in Live Oak, Florida. Hosted by the University of Florida, students joined together to enhance their farm evaluation skills to prepare them for a future career in the dairy industry.

Kicking off the two day contest, students visited Full Circle Dairy in Lee, for a general overview of the dairy and items they may want to look for at the contest dairy. Later that evening, they had brief trainings on PC-Dart, Dairy Comp 305, and financial indicators. Students were divided into teams and were able to review data from the contest herd to prepare them for the on farm evaluation the following day. Mentors from all aspects of the dairy industry were present as well to help guide the students when mining the data and for the on farm evaluation.

On Monday, teams started bright and early at the contest herd, White Oak Dairy in Mayo. Students had two hours to observe and evaluate all aspects of the dairy while taking notes and photos needed for their presentation to the judges. Following the on farm evaluation, students developed a twenty minute team presentation that includes their recommendations for the dairy on reproduction, nutrition, milking procedures, cow comfort, animal health, and financial indicators. These presentation were given the next day to a panel of industry judges.

The judges awarded the following teams with first and second place:

#### *Division A*

**First place:** Team 6, consisting of Jay Moon, University of Georgia; Charles Wilson, West Virginia University; Jazzmin Minnitee, Alabama A&M University; Emily Richardson, Virginia Tech; and Kim Reuscher, Tarleton State University. This team was sponsored by Balchem Corporation.

**Second place:** Team 1, consisting of Andrew Thomason, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College; Greyson Fernandez, University of Georgia; Kayla Proctor, Eastern Kentucky University; Lauren Luther, North Carolina State University; Huridises; University of Florida; Leah Smooth, Tuskegee University. This team was sponsored by DRMS.

#### *Division B*

**First place:** Team 15, consisting of Hunter Turner, Tarleton State University; Andrew Laffey, Virginia Tech; Abbe Jones, Eastern Kentucky University; Carrisa Womble, North Carolina State University; Rachel Schauer, University of Mount Olive. This team was sponsored by Merck Animal Health.

**Second place:** Team 11, consisting of Robert Dunaway, Middle Tennessee State University; Austin Rash, University of Mount Olive; Kaitlyn Amsler, Clemson University; DeNiqua Lee, Alabama A&M University; Kristin Judy, University of Tennessee. This team was sponsored by Adisseo.

The Southern 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 250 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.

#### *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. The 2018 national event will be held April 12-14 in Visalia, CA; details are at [www.dairychallenge.org](http://www.dairychallenge.org).