



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Large, Talented Group of Students at 2018 Midwest Dairy Challenge®**

MADISON, Wisc., February 7-9, 2018– Coming from 10 states across the Midwest, 110 students from 20 colleges and universities gathered in the heart of Madison, Wisc., for the 13th annual Midwest Dairy Challenge. Students came together to gain valuable life, career and dairy management skills, as Dairy Challenge allows collegiates to apply theory and learning on a real-world dairy farm while working as part of a team.

The three-day event kicked off with seminars on a variety of topics to hone skills and information the students would use in the farm evaluation. Students participated in presentations from industry leaders on benchmarking financials, optimizing cow comfort, mining for data and utilizing PCDart and DairyComp 305. During the first evening, teams of four to five students from different schools met, joined in team building and analyzed herd management data and farm financials. Each team was supported by two mentors from agribusiness or universities, who guided them through the data analysis and farm inspection.

On Thursday, February 8, teams visited one of three farms: Wargo Acres, of Lodi; Dohm Farms, of Dane; and Dean's of Dane. Teams evaluated their respective farm to make recommendations in nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, cow comfort and financial management. After working all afternoon on their presentations, students networked with agribusiness sponsors while participating in workshops on etiquette, interviews and career development.

On the third and final day, students presented their analysis to a panel of five judges and the farm owners. Each team delivered a 20-minute presentation on the strengths and areas of opportunity for their respective farm. Students also had the excellent industry networking opportunities with companies at an innovation fair and joined a panel of industry leaders on dairy environmental sustainability efforts.

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The judges awarded the following teams with the first and second place ranking among the eight total teams participating on each farm.

#### Farm 1, Wargo Acres

**First Place:** Team 8, Alex Faber- Lakeshore Technical College, Julia Nunes- University of Minnesota, Diana Zamora- Kansas State University, Cassie Krebill- Iowa State University, Anthony Schmitz- University of Wisconsin- Madison

**Second Place:** Team 6, Ryan Nelson- Kansas State University, Kate Sherman- The Ohio State University, Jeana Noel- Northwest Missouri State University, Kristen Broege- University of Wisconsin- Madison

### Farm 2, Dohm Farms

**First Place:** Team 14, Meghan Skiba- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Alexandra Houck- The Ohio State University, Krizia Lepiz- Purdue University, Ryan Smith- University of Wisconsin- Platteville, Nick Bagge- Northeast Iowa Community College

**Second Place:** Team 12, Chad Bruss- University of Wisconsin- Platteville, Ellie Steensma- Dordt College, Breyer Ott- Iowa State University, Abigail Martin- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Rachel Haynes- Purdue University

### Farm 3, Dean's

**First Place:** Team 18, Alex Engemen- Northwest Missouri State University, Cassie Hull- University of Wisconsin- Platteville, Hannah Meller- The Ohio State University, Lindsey Lehman- University of Wisconsin- River Falls, Austin Haywood- Michigan State University

**Second Place:** Team 2, Christina Ybema- Dordt College, Ronna Woock- University of Wisconsin- River Falls, Caleb Blaisdell- South Dakota State University, Ashley Binder- Purdue University

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 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 over 5,000 students for careers as dairy owners or managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals.

The 2019 Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge will be hosted by the University of Illinois.

### *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 April 12-14 in Visalia, CA; details are at [www.dairychallenge.org](http://www.dairychallenge.org).

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## **PHOTOS**

### Team 8.jpg

During the Midwest Dairy Challenge, Team 8 was awarded the top ranking for their evaluation at Wargo Acres. Alex Faber- Lakeshore Technical College, Julia Nunes- University of Minnesota, Diana Zamora- Kansas State University, Cassie Krebill- Iowa State University, Anthony Schmitz- University of Wisconsin- Madison

### Team 14.jpg

Team 14 captured first place on Dohm Farms. Meghan Skiba- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Alexandra Houck- The Ohio State University, Krizia Lepiz- Purdue University, Ryan Smith- University of Wisconsin- Platteville, Nick Bagge- Northeast Iowa Community College

### Team 18.jpg

Taking top honors for their assessment of Dean's dairy was Team 18. Alex Engemen- Northwest Missouri State University, Cassie Hull- University of Wisconsin- Platteville, Hannah Meller- The Ohio State University, Lindsey Lehman- University of Wisconsin- River Falls, Austin Haywood- Michigan State University

### Evaluation

Students spent half the day on the second day of the contest to evaluate their respective dairies. Students evaluate all aspect of the dairy from reproduction, financials, cow comfort to feed quality.

### Teamwork

Students, along with industry mentors, work together to file through the information given to them. Students are in aggregate teams made up of four to five students from the different universities and colleges.

### Innovation Fair

At the end of the competition, students are invited to attend the Innovation Fair where industry professionals and sponsors have the opportunity to visit with students about future careers and internships available.