



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **California Hosts 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Dairy Challenge®**

Visalia, Calif, April 24, 2018 – College dairy students – 235 in total – from 28 different states and Canadian provinces traveled to sunny California for the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Dairy Challenge.® This was the first time many of the students had visited a Western dairy, which provided extra intrigue and challenge in their task as a consultant team for a local dairy.

Visalia, Calif., was home base for the 2018 North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC) held April 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, with six area dairies participating in the educational event. Dairy students from 38 colleges worked to improve their dairy management and communication skills, networked with other students, and explored industry careers.

“It is really incredible to see the California dairy community come together to make this premier event possible for these college students – from host dairies, to agribusiness sponsors and dairy product donors, to the more than 120 volunteers that helped plan and coordinate the Dairy Challenge,” explained Chad Wright, DVM, of Bidart Dairy and NAIDC Board Chairperson.

Dairy Challenge is a unique, real-world experience where dairy students work as a team and apply their college coursework to evaluate and provide solutions for an operating dairy farm. In Visalia, two programs ran concurrently – the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Dairy Challenge contest and the sixth annual Dairy Challenge Academy. The events were coordinated by the NAIDC Board of Directors and the Western planning committee.

This year’s contest included 38 universities, whose four-person teams competed for awards based on their quality of teams’ farm analysis and appropriate solutions. Their farm presentations were evaluated by a panel of five judges, including dairy producers, veterinarians, finance specialists and seasoned agribusiness personnel.

The Academy provided interactive training for more than 90 students from four-year universities or two-year dairy programs. Academy participants were divided into smaller groups including students from various schools, and dairy industry volunteers worked as Advisors to coach these less-experienced Academy participants as they assessed the dairy and developed recommendations.

#### **Dairy Challenge Applies Learning to a Real-world Dairy**

Over its 17-year history, Dairy Challenge has helped more than 6,400 students prepare for careers in the dairy industry, dairy production and veterinary medicine.

The three-day event began with learning stations at Maddox Dairy, Riverdale, CA, where the Maddox team and their consultants helped students better understand California dairy conditions and shared details about reproduction, nutrition, cow comfort, milking protocols and other key areas. Back at the Visalia Convention Center, students enjoyed ice cream sundaes as they poured over the in-depth dairy records for their assigned dairy.

Day two began with the on-farm analysis, with all students having just two hours to visit their assigned dairy and witness the dairy’s operations. After a question & answer session with the farm owners and advisors, the student teams developed recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, cow comfort, and labor and financial management.

On Day Three, students presented their recommendations to the judging panel, visited with sponsors at the Career and Innovation Fair, and learned through presentations from top-level NAIDC sponsors. These talks were presented by:

- Ryan Camara, Vice President-Credit and Linda Sousa, Assistant Vice President-Credit, Farm Credit West – *“How to Prepare for Your Lender”*
- Brad Barham, Sales Support Manager, All West/Select Sires – *“Utilizing Data to Maximize Genetic Improvement”*
- Heather Lee, Dairy Regional Account Manager and Kurtis Monteiro, Dairy Account Manager, Genex Cooperative, Inc. – *“Bringing Value to the Dairy Industry as a Recent Graduate”*
- Josh Hushon, US Dairy Marketing Communications Lead, Cargill – *“Farm Decision Making: Unlocking the Power of Data and Analytics”*
- Christie Underwood, Ph.D., Nutritionist & Technical Consultant, Land O’ Lakes – *“Getting Your Career Started: Launching a Successful Path”*
- Jack Hippen, North American and EU Sales Director, ST Genetics – *“The History of Sexed Semen”*

### **Eight College Teams Earn Top Awards**

At Saturday evening’s banquet, the following contest teams and students were announced as First Place winners, with each student receiving a \$200 scholarship.

- **Michigan State University:** Alycia Burch, Nicole Chase, Ethan Haywood, and Ellen Launstein coached by Roger Thompson
- **University of Wisconsin-Madison:** Charles Hamilton, Anthony Schmitz, Logan Voigts and Connor Willems Coached by Theodore Halbach and Dave Combs
- **Iowa State University:** Kassidy Buse, Brady Goetz, Cassie Krebill and Sabrina Portner. Coached by Hugo Ramirez
- **California Polytechnic State University:** Anthony Echeverria, Amber LaSalle, Tony Lopes and Matthew Ruby. Coached by David Vagnoni

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

- **University of Vermont/Vermont Technical College:** Michelle Poulin, Julee Tellkamp, Sharron Palmer, Quentin Nelson. Coached by Wanda Emerich
- **Cornell University:** Cooper Galton, Britney Hill, Jake Palladino, Keith Koerner. Coached by Mike Van Amburgh
- **University of Guelph:** Andrew VanderSpek, Jeroen Slits, Matthew Wells, Michael Reijnen, Coached by Trevor DeVries, Robyn Walsh, Matt Groen
- **The Ohio State University:** Jaclyn Krymowski, Hannah Meller, Alexandra Houck, Marina Sweet. Coached by Maurice Eastridge

All Dairy Challenge contest participants received a lifetime membership to Dairy Shrine, compliments of Allflex USA and Lely North America.

### **Total Industry Effort**

Five dairy farms opened up their farms for analysis and in exchange, received a wealth of ideas from students and judges. Host farms for the 2018 Dairy Challenge were:

- **Van Beek Brothers,** Tipton, CA
- **Double J Dairy,** Visalia, CA
- **Rancho Sierra Vista,** Visalia, CA
- **Delta View Farms,** Visalia, CA
- **Double Oak Dairy,** Tulare, CA

“On behalf of all the students and organizers, we sincerely thank the hundreds of individuals and organizations that made this event possible,” said Cathy Myers, Co-Chair of the event. “We look forward to interacting with these students as they continue onto careers as dairy owners, managers, consultants and the many other support roles that make dairy possible.”

### **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 17-year national history,

Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 6,400 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals. The next national event will be hosted in Tifton, Georgia, March 28-30, 2019. Four regional events are held in late fall and winter; details are at [www.dairychallenge.org](http://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 at [http://www.dairychallenge.org/media\\_gallery.php](http://www.dairychallenge.org/media_gallery.php).

Additional photos are available upon request. Email [rsmith@omegabalancer.com](mailto:rsmith@omegabalancer.com) with specific photo requests.

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:



### 2018 NAIDC Full Group Photo

Coming from 38 colleges in 28 states and provinces, 235 students participated in the three-day Dairy Challenge, held April 12-14, 2018 in Visalia, California.



**1<sup>st</sup> Place Team - Michigan State University:** L to R: Coach Thompson, Ethan Haywood, Ellen Launstein, Alycia Burch, Nicole Chase, Coach Domecq



**NORTH AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE**  
**Dairy Challenge**  
*Tomorrow's Dairy Leaders*

**1<sup>st</sup> Place Team - University of Wisconsin-Madison:** L to R Coach Theodore Halbach, Logan Voigts, Connor Willems, Charles Hamilton, Anthony Schmitz, Coach Dave Combs



**NORTH AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE**  
**Dairy Challenge**  
*Tomorrow's Dairy Leaders*

**1<sup>st</sup> Place Team - Iowa State University:** L to R Coach Hugo A Ramirez, Sabrina Portner, Kassidy Buse, Cassie Krebill, Brady Goetz



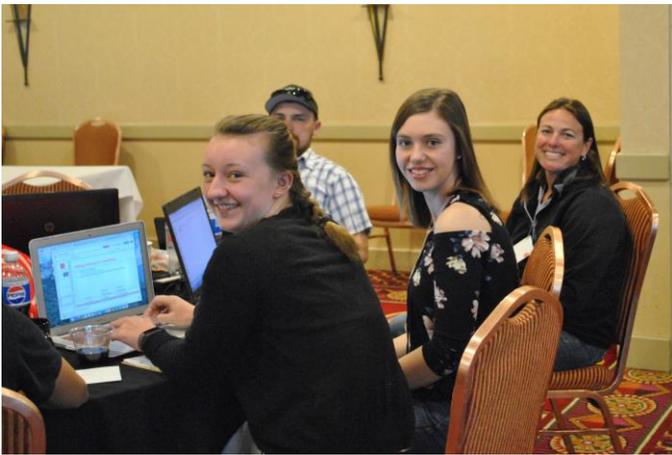
**NORTH AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE**  
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*Tomorrow's Dairy Leaders*

**1<sup>st</sup> Place Team - California Polytechnic State University:** L to R: Coach Vagnoni, Anthony Echeverria, Amber LaSalle, Matthew Ruby, Tony Lopes



### **2018 NAIDC – Career Fair**

**Caption:** Representatives from agribusinesses that support Dairy Challenge visit with students about career opportunities and industry product and service innovations.



### **2018 NAIDC - Data Review**

**Caption:** Dairy Challenge students take a deep dive into the herd management and finance records that are provided by the dairy they are assigned to evaluate and develop recommendations for continuous improvement.



### **2018 NAIDC – Dairy Inspection**

**Caption:** During Dairy Challenge, students have a relatively short time on the dairy – about two hours – to understand current operating procedures, assess strengths and gather clues about opportunities for improvement.