



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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50 collegiate students participate in 13th annual Western Regional Dairy Challenge

Fifty students from six Western U.S. universities and one Canadian college traveled to Twin Falls, Idaho, for the 13th annual Western Dairy Challenge on March 1 – 3, 2018. The contest was hosted by the University of Idaho and headquartered at the College of Southern Idaho's campus.

The Western Dairy Challenge is a three-day educational competition designed to prepare students for dairy careers. Working in mixed-university teams of four or five students, participants assessed all aspects of a working dairy farm, including facilities, nutrition, financials, reproduction and animal health. Students collaborated on a 20-minute team presentation that detailed their observations and suggestions to a panel of judges. Teams were ranked based on how well their evaluations matched the judges' evaluations of the dairy operation.

On Thursday students listened to a session about having a zero tolerance for contagious mastitis on farms. They also kicked off the competition portion of the event where they assembled into aggregate teams (meeting their new teammates from other universities for the first time) and spent the evening diving into the host dairy's records to assess the strengths and weaknesses that show up in the numbers.

White Clover Dairy, owned by Todd Roth, graciously welcomed the teams to his family's dairy on Friday where students spent 3 1/2 hours walking the facility, observing the cows and the management aspects of the operation. Following the on-farm assessment, the students participated in a question and answer session with the management team of the dairy. Several sponsors attending the event networked with and mentored the students throughout the weekend.

On Saturday morning, students presented their findings to a panel of judges made up of a nutritionist, a veterinarian, a financial analyst and a dairy producer who ranked them on their presentation and conclusions. Students also had the opportunity to hear the judging panel's full critique of the dairy's opportunities to round out this learning experience.

Platinum teams:

Team #8 — Christy Achen (Utah State University), Kendelle Puga (University of Idaho), Lauralise Buss (University of Alberta), Maxwell Freeman (Utah State University) and Cody Thompson (California Polytechnic State University).

Team #3 — Matthew Stokes (University of Idaho), William Greenwood (California Polytechnic State University), Amber La Salle (California Polytechnic State University), Lauren Engelking (University of Alberta).

Team #10 — Makayla Toste (Fresno State University), Andrew Papineau (University of Idaho), Marcy Bartelheim (Washington State University) and Caitlin Lopes (California Polytechnic State University).

Gold teams:

Team #1 — Anthony Echeverria (California Polytechnic State University), Matthew Ruby (California Polytechnic State University), Joe Coles (Utah State University), Ziyu Li (University of Idaho) and Jannelle Morrison (University of Alberta).

Team #12 — Brady Spackman (Utah State University), Jacen Quesada (Fresno State University), Heather Young (Washington State University) and Cassidy DeRousse (California Polytechnic State University).

Team #4 — Christian Hoekstra (California Polytechnic State University), Garrett Steinberger (Texas A&M University), Leslie Jacobsen (Fresno State University) and Marissa Shock (California Polytechnic State University).

A committee of dairy industry representatives organized the Dairy Challenge. A long list of volunteers was important to the competition's success. To volunteer or become a sponsor for the 2019 contest, contact Molly Kelley at mollyk@dairychallenge.org or Renee Smith at rsmith@omegabalancer.com. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Contributing sponsor listings are available on the website.

The Western Dairy Challenge is under the guidance and support of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC), which was established in April 2002 as a collegiate management contest to incorporate evaluation of all aspects of a specific dairy business. For more information, visit www.dairychallenge.org. The four regional events lead to the national contest of the same format, which will be held on April 12-14, 2018, in Visalia, California.

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Google Photos Link:

Western Dairy Challenge Photo Highlights
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/KCYJ2XIPa8jDoRiv1>

Western Dairy Challenge Team Photos
(Team # and Member Names in Photo Comments)
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/2qphqPwPsgNheU1F3>