

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Kentucky Hosts Southern Regional Dairy Challenge®

Campbellsville, Kentucky was home base for the 2019 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge held November 21 to 23. The event was hosted by the University of Kentucky in conjunction with the staff at the Taylor County Cooperative Extension office. Fifty-Nine dairy students from 13 colleges worked to improve their dairy management and communication skills, networked with other students, and explored industry careers. 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. The events were coordinated by the southern region planning committee.

This year's contest included 13 universities. Teams were compiled from all different universities into four and five member teams and they 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.

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

Over its 17-year history, Dairy Challenge has helped more than 5,000 students prepare for careers in the dairy industry, dairy production and veterinary medicine.

The three-day event began with learning stations at David Corbin's farm., where the farm team and industry representatives helped students better understand Kentucky dairy conditions and shared details about reproduction, cow comfort, data management, nutrition, transition diseases, and calf raising. Back at the Taylor County Cooperative Extension Center, students participated in education seminars and enjoyed a tasty dinner provided by the staff of the extension center.

Day One concluded with the contest participants receiving in-depth management data from the contest dairy, Sidebottom Farm. The next day, all students had a short time – only two hours – to visit the contest dairy and witness dairy operations. After a question-answer session with the farm owners, 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 two groups of judging panels, visited with sponsors at the Career Fair, and learned through presentations from sponsors. As the third day ended, the following teams were announced as first place winners.

Group 1: Team 5 – AgriKing – team members were Sarah Thomas (Virginia Tech), Landry Vieth (Tarleton State University), Sara Wint (Clemson University), Kennedy Dames (Tuskegee University), and Caitlin Zaring (University of Tennessee).

Group 2: Team 13 – Merck Animal Health – team members were Jarrod Carrigan (University of Mount Olive), Michael Miller (West Virginia University), Lilly Robertson (University of Kentucky), and Ellie Grossnickle (Virginia Tech)

#### **Total Industry Effort**

The host farms opened up their farms for analysis and in exchange, received a wealth of ideas from students and judges. The farms for the 2019 southern Regional Dairy Challenge were:

- **David Corbin Farm**, Campbellsville, Kentucky (pre-contest tour farm)
- **Sidebottom Farm**, Greensburg, Kentucky (contest farm)

This event would not have been possible without Dr. Amaral-Phillips at the University of Kentucky, Carolyn Morris and Pat Hardesty at the Taylor County Cooperative Extension Center, Dave Winston, Southern Region Dairy Challenge Chair, The southern regional planning committee, and all of the gracious sponsors.

#### ***About Dairy Challenge***

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge 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 5,000 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals. The next

national event also be hosted in Green Bay, Wisconsin, March 26-28, 2020. Four regional events are held in late fall and winter; details are at [www.dairychallenge.org](http://www.dairychallenge.org).

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**



**2019 Southern Regional Full Group Photo**

Coming from 13 colleges, 59 students participated in the three-day Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, held November 21-23 in Campbellsville, KY.



**2019 First Place Team Group 1**

**Caption:** Earning first place honors at the 2019 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge® for group 1 was team 5.

**First Row:** Sara Wint (Clemson University), and Caitlin Zaring (University of Tennessee).

**Second Row:** Sarah Thomas (Virginia Tech), Landry Vieth (Tarleton State University), and Kennedy Dames (Tuskegee University),



**2019 First Place Team Group 2**

**Caption:** Earning first place honors at the 2019 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge® for group 2 was team 13.

**First Row:** Lilly Robertson (University of Kentucky), and Ellie Grossnickle (Virginia Tech)

**Second Row:** Jarrod Carrigan (University of Mount Olive), Michael Miller (West Virginia University),



**2019 Southern Regional host contest farm**



**2019 Southern Regional Data Review**

**Caption:** Dairy Challenge students, like team 9, 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.



### **2019 Southern Regional 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.