

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Hosts Southern Regional Dairy Challenge®

Granbury, Texas was home base for the 2021 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge held November 14 to 16. The event was hosted by the Tarleton State University and Texas A&M University. Twenty-nine dairy students from 5 universities 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 5 universities divided into three and four 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 20-year history, Dairy Challenge has helped more than 7,000 students prepare for careers in the dairy industry, dairy production and veterinary medicine.

The three-day event began with learning stations at Tarleton State University's dairy, the Southwest Regional Dairy Center. The farm team and industry representatives helped students better understand Texas dairy conditions and shared details about reproduction, milking procedures, heat stress and nutrition. Back at the Lake Granbury Conference Center, students participated in education seminars.

Day One concluded with the contest participants receiving in-depth management data from the contest dairy, Hoekman Dairy. 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. From Judge Panel A: Team 3 including Hannah Czerminski, Wyatt Harlan and Nicole Koke from Texas A&M University. From Judge Panel B: Maria Renee Fuentes Ayala, Allison Hajny, Georgina Madok and Emily Read from Texas A&M University.

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 2021 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge were:

- **Southwest Regional Dairy Center**, Stephenville, Texas (pre-contest tour farm)
- **Hoekman Dairy**, Dublin, Texas (contest farm)

This event would not have been possible without Dr. Barbara Jones at Tarleton State University, Dr. Sushil Paudyal at Texas A&M University, Kas Ingawa, 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 20-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 7,000 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 31 – April 2, 2022. Four regional events are held in late fall and winter; details are at <http://www.dairychallenge.org/>.

PHOTO CAPTIONS



2021 Southern Regional Full Group Photo

Coming from 5 universities, 29 students participated in the three-day Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, held November 14-16 in Granbury Texas.



2021 First Place Team Group 1

Hannah Czerminkski, Wyatt Harlan and Nicole Koke from Texas A&M University



2021 First Place Team Group 2

Maria Renee Fuentes Ayala, Allison Hajny, Georgina Madok and Emily Read from Texas A&M University



2021 Southern Regional host contest farm



2021 Southern Regional Data Review

Caption: Dairy Challenge students, like team 2, 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.



2021 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.