

Sent on behalf of NAIDC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Molly Kelley, North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, 217-493-3441 or naidcmjk@aol.com

In Its 12th Year, Midwest Dairy Challenge Provides Career Training for College Students

Platteville, Wis., February 17-19, 2016– It was a splendid day for college students to visit two extraordinary dairy farms in southwest Wisconsin.

The 12th annual Midwest Dairy Challenge, which ran February 17-19, 2016, attracted nearly 75 students from 17 college dairy programs to the event hosted by Southwest Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in Platteville, Wisconsin.

Students learn how to tie farm management decisions with economics, and it's important to get students and industry together. Students make many good connections through Dairy Challenge. Dr. Tera Montgomery, co-chair 2016 Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge, states "We would not have been able to accomplish such a big task without the help of the regional and national leadership of NAIDC and I am always impressed to see how the industry pulls together to give our students this tremendous learning and networking opportunity."

Dairy Challenge is an innovative competition developed by industry and university professionals and designed to prepare students for dairy careers. In one national and four regional events – like the Midwest in Platteville – students work in teams to evaluate a provide recommendations for an operating dairy farm. Participants worked in mixed-university teams of four or five students and assessed all farm operations, including facilities, nutrition, financials, reproduction and animal health. Students collaborated on a 20-minute team presentation that detailed observations and suggestions to a panel of judges. Teams were ranked based on how well their evaluations matched the judges' evaluations of the dairy farm.

Host farms were Stone-Front Farm, Lancaster, Wisconsin and Majestic View Dairies, LLC, Lancaster, Wisconsin.

Participants traveled to northeast Wisconsin from Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota and many points between. Participating universities and technical schools included Dordt College, Fox Valley Technical College, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Lakeshore Technical College, University of Minnesota, Michigan State University, Northwest Missouri State University, Oklahoma State University, University of Illinois, University of Missouri, The Ohio State University, South Dakota State University, Southwest Technical College, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Platteville and University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Education and Competition Combine For Innovative Learning

Wisconsin dairy professionals presented educational seminars to help students prepare for their Dairy Challenge task and gain more real-world experience. Sessions were presented by:

- more -

- Dawn Haag, Badgerland Financial: Interpreting Financial Figures
- Keith Engel, GEA: Udder Health

Throughout the event, students networked with industry professionals and volunteers. Representatives from many Platinum sponsors, including several searching for both interns and full-time employees, were also available for a career fair held on Friday.

Teams were named for top-level sponsors, with judges selecting two teams as first place winners:

- On Farm 1, team Quality Liquid Feeds was awarded first place. Team members included Daniel Dominguez, Michigan State University, Johanna Knorr, University of Minnesota, Jenica Reagan, Oklahoma State University, Whitney Shonka, Iowa State University and Jacob Wilshusen, University of Missouri.
- On Farm 2, judges selected team AgSource Cooperative Services for the top award. Individuals included Taylor Kruse, The Ohio State University, Taurie Schroeder, Northwest Missouri State University, Katie Sell, Fox Valley Technical College and Wyatt Smith, University of Minnesota.

A complete list of Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge contest participants and their placing can be found at www.dairychallenge.org/mw_event.php.

About Dairy Challenge

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 300 dairy collegiates – are funded through generous support by 130 agribusinesses and dairy producers. Over its 15-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 5,000 students for careers as dairy owners or managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals.

The 2016 national competition and Dairy Challenge Academy will be April 7-9 in Syracuse, New York. Four regional contests are held in late fall and winter; details are at www.dairychallenge.org.

###

PHOTO CAPTIONS



Team 6

Capturing first place on Farm 1 was the “Quality Liquid Feeds” team. Front (left to right) are team members Jacob Wilshusen, University of Missouri, Jenica Reagan, Oklahoma State University, Whitney Shonka, Iowa State University, Johanna Knorr, University of Minnesota, and Daniel Dominguez, Michigan State University.



Team 15

Earning the top honor on Farm 2 was the “AgSource Cooperative Services” team. Front (left to right) are team members Wyatt Smith, University of Minnesota, Taylor Kruse, The Ohio State University, Taurie Schroeder, Northwest Missouri State University, and Katie Sell, Fox Valley Technical College.



Group Photo

All of the college students that were in attendance for the Midwest Dairy Challenge.



Testing Feed

During the farm visits, students take the opportunity to evaluate and look at different feedstuffs.



Working

Students are compiling their evaluations of the farms and preparing their presentation.