



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NAIDC Elects New Leadership for 2024-2025**

Madison, WI, July 29, 2024 – North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC) recently elected new leadership, including two new board members and the 2024 – 2025 Executive Committee. As described in the NAIDC mission statement, the board focus is to “Develop tomorrow’s dairy leaders and enhance the progress of the dairy industry, by providing education, communication and networking among students, producers, and agribusiness and university personnel.”

In the 22-year history of Dairy Challenge, members of the Board of Directors have provided leadership as the program has expanded significantly and evolved to meet ever-changing dairy dynamics. Dairy Challenge began in 2002 with 56 students from 13 colleges in one national event. Now, more than 500 dairy students have opportunities to participate each year through the national competition, the Dairy Challenge Academy and four regional events. Representing the countless volunteers and supporters of these events, the Board of Directors includes a mix of university professionals, dairy producers and industry sponsors.

Newly elected to the 15-person volunteer NAIDC Board of Directors include:

- **Heather Weeks, Farm Credit East, Bedford, NH.** - Heather is a Farm Business Consultant with Farm Credit East helping farmers grow their businesses and realize their dreams. Since joining Farm Credit in 2016, Heather has worked with diverse farm businesses in lending and business consulting. Heather also has experience in agriculture development, serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador and continues to volunteer with the USAID Farmer-to-Farmer program teaching financial literacy around the world. Prior to joining Farm Credit, Heather worked for Penn State Extension teaching farm business management. She holds an M.S. from Virginia Tech in Ag Economics and a B.S. in Dairy Science. As an undergraduate Heather participated in the Southern Regional Dairy Challenge program twice. In her professional capacity, Heather has worked in the resource room with Penn State Extension, served as an advisor in the Dairy Challenge Academy program, and judged both regionally in the northeast and at the national contest.

- **Jenn Lane, Cargill Animal Nutrition, Hanford, CA.** – Jenn works for Cargill Animal Nutrition, working specifically in their Food Safety, Quality, and Regulatory division. By performing internal

audits, she is part of the team that ensures feed safety for animals and ultimately human consumption, Jenn has been involved with the Western Regional Dairy Challenge since the beginning of that contest, serving as a member of the Planning Committee. She also has assisted the Cal Poly Dairy Challenge teams with practice herds, participating in Dairy Challenge events since the first contest.

**The NAIDC Executive Committee for 2024-25 includes:**

- Chair: Alex White, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Vice Chair: Jeffrey Elliot, Balchem, Amarillo, TX.
- Associate Vice Chair: Ted Halbach, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI.
- Finance Chair: Megan Mouw, Elanco Animal Health, Fresno, CA.
- Programs and Engagement Chair: Gail Carpenter, Iowa State University, Ames, IA.
- Program Chair: Trevor DeVries, University of Guelph, Guelph, CAN.

***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 22-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 9,000 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals. In addition to the national competition and Dairy Challenge Academy held in March/April, four regional contests are held in late fall and winter; details are at [www.dairychallenge.org](http://www.dairychallenge.org).

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**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

Heather Weeks: Heather Weeks of Farm Credit East

Jenn Lane: Jenn Lane of Cargill Animal Nutrition

