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Late Don Rogers Receives Dairy Challenge® Founders Award

Madison, Wisc., December 1, 2017 - North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC) recognized the late Don Rogers of Suffield, Conn. with the Dairy Challenge Founders Award during the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge in Auburn, NY in late October. Don was retired as a farm business consultant with Farm Credit East and was instrumental in developing Dairy Challenge at the national and regional levels.

Jan Bitter of the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge Committee shared, “Don knew that if he could teach young people the basic skills of teamwork and management, they would have a better start in the dairy industry which he loved so much. From this notion, Dairy Challenge was created.”

Rogers along with other like-minded individuals came together to host the first Dairy Challenge at Michigan State University in 2002. The first national Dairy Challenge hosted 56 students from 12 colleges and also gave birth to regional Dairy Challenges held across the country, including the northeast where Don played a significant role. Since then more than 6,000 students have participated in Dairy Challenge.

In addition to recognizing Rogers and his contributions in front of attendees of the 2017 Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge in Auburn, NY in October, Bitter later presented the award and a tribute book to Rogers’ wife, Rosemary, and his two children.

Many years ago the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge began recognizing exceptional teams at the regional event with the Don Rogers Platinum Award, in honor of Rogers for his energy, creativity and dedication to the future of the dairy industry. This award is reserved only for those showing the highest level of achievement, and is not automatically awarded to first-place teams.

The Dairy Challenge Founders Award was established in 2016 to recognize volunteers with extraordinary, consistent contributions and/or distinguished service to NAIDC. Past recipients of the award include Linda Hodorff of Hodorff Enterprises, Kas Ingawa of Dairy Records Management Services, Barry Putnam of Farm Credit East, Dr. Dave Selner of National Dairy Shrine, Dave Thorbahn of Select Sires and Dr. Michael Van Amburgh of Cornell University.

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 16-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 6,000 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals. The next national event will be hosted in Visalia, Calif., April 12-14, 2018. Four regional events will be held this fall and winter; details are at www.dairychallenge.org[dairychallenge.org].

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Photo caption: Jan Bitter of Farm Credit East (right) presents Rosemary Rogers (left), wife of the late Don Rogers with a tribute book of quotes and memories from fellow Dairy Challenge supporters in honor of Don. Don Rogers was recognized with the Dairy Challenge Founders Award in October.