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California to Host Premier Educational Event for Dairy Students

Visalia, CA, March 21, 2017 – The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC) and Dairy Challenge Academy will bring together 234 students in Visalia, CA, March 30 – April 1, 2017. Students from 37 colleges across the U.S. and three Canadian provinces will put their textbook knowledge to work by evaluating a dairy operation and developing recommendations.

“Dairy Challenge is the largest gathering of collegiates pursuing a dairy-related career,” said Amy te Plate-Church, NAIDC board chair. “Our upcoming event in California will provide excellent educational, communication and networking opportunities to help develop tomorrow’s dairy leaders and enhance the progress of the dairy industry.”

This year 144 students will compete as 36 four-member teams in the national contest, and 90 students will participate in the Dairy Challenge Academy. Between the national contest and Academy, collegiate participants will visit seven dairy farms in the surrounding Central Valley.

Contest participants will evaluate an operating dairy farm, analyze farm data and ask questions of farm owners. Then each team develops recommendations, which will be presented to farm owners and a panel of five judges. At a concluding banquet, eight college teams will be announced as award winners, meaning their recommendations most closely match those of the official judges. Students participating in the Dairy Challenge Academy have a similar mission to evaluate and provide recommendations for an area dairy; however, Academy participants work on mixed-university teams and dairy industry professionals serve as Academy Advisors to mentor them during their discovery and analysis.

Dairy Challenge is funded through the generous support of 130 agribusinesses and dairy farms. Dairy Challenge was started 15 years ago through cooperation between universities, dairy producers and agribusinesses. The event expanded in 2013 with the Dairy Challenge Academy, providing hands-on learning where teams of students evaluate a dairy operation with the help of dairy industry professionals serving as Academy Advisors.

In addition to the national competition and Academy, students will also participate in other educational and networking activities such as interactive stations on a tour farm, presentations on research and industry trends, and interaction with agribusinesses in a career fair.

Supporters can follow the student activity through posts and photos at www.facebook.com/DairyChallenge and @DairyChallenge on Twitter and Instagram.

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 15-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.

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.

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