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## **Penn State to host 6th Annual Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge**

The sixth annual Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge will be held Oct. 30-Nov. 1, in Harrisburg, Pa. Lisa Holden and Larry Muller from The Penn State University's department of animal science are leading this year's Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge.

The Penn State duo indicates there are already more than 100 students from 14 universities committed to the 2008 Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge. They expect 130 students from colleges and universities across the Northeast and Canada to participate in the three-day program.

Dairy Challenge strives to incorporate a higher-learning atmosphere with practical application to help prepare students for careers in the dairy industry. "Employers seek out students who have participated in the Dairy Challenge," states Lisa Holden, "and Dairy Challenge alumni return to the event to hire participating students. It's a win-win situation for the entire dairy industry."

The Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge creates an educational environment and facilitates a real-world dairy team situation. To accomplish this, students are placed on mixed-university teams.

"Putting students with different skills from different schools on a team to work together in finding solutions is a very important learning experience," comments Judge Selection Committee Chair John Lehr of First Pioneer Farm Credit. "On today's dairies it takes a team of outside professionals working together to make a difference. Students need to practice teamwork. "Dairy Challenge is a tremendous opportunity for participating dairy farms to receive consulting advice," Lehr remarks, "and for agribusiness sponsors and students to meet and discuss prospective working relationships."

Collaboration with area agribusiness professionals helped Muller and Holden secure three host farms located in Lancaster County, Pa. Students will arrive on the afternoon of Oct. 30, and participate in event orientation and team-building activities. Day two begins with each five-person team receiving information about a real-life dairy, including production and farm management data. Following a dairy operation evaluation, teams develop a comprehensive program including recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management. The second day concludes with an informal dinner attended by sponsors, students and advisers. Day three is presentation day and team members share recommendations with a panel of judges. Participant knowledge is tested as they field questions from judges. Judges evaluate students' presentations on farm analysis and recommendations. The evening of day three finishes with a reception and awards banquet.

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) and its regional contests have become the premier programs for promoting the future of dairying through college and industry partnerships.

NAIDC and the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge are fully funded through the monetary and/or in-kind sponsorship support of agribusiness and dairy producers. Contributions may be made in any amount. Defined recognition levels are \$500 for Bronze, \$1,000 for Silver, \$2,500 for Gold and \$5,000 or more for Platinum. To become a sponsor, contact Jan Bitter of First Pioneer Farm Credit at 800-392-3276 or [jan.bitter@firstpioneer.com](mailto:jan.bitter@firstpioneer.com). All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

The Northeast Regional program is under the guidance and support of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, established in April of 2002 as a management contest to incorporate all phases of a specific dairy business. For more information, visit [www.dairychallenge.org](http://www.dairychallenge.org).

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