

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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111 Students from 14 Colleges Participate in 9th Annual Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge

Morrisville State College hosted a successful Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge that drew 111 students from 12 northeast colleges and two Canadian universities to Watertown, New York on October 27-29, 2011. This event marked the ninth annual Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge which is an innovative, three-day educational competition designed to prepare students for careers in the dairy industry.

Working in mixed-university teams of four or five students, contestants assessed all aspects of a working dairy farm, including facilities, nutrition, financials, reproduction, animal health and much more. Students collaborated on a 20-minute team presentation that detailed their observations and suggestions to a panel of judges and participating farm families. Teams were ranked as platinum, gold or silver based on how well their evaluations matched the judges' evaluations of the dairy operation.

The objective of this evaluation process is to create a real-life situation that stresses the importance of teamwork and professionalism. Industry chair Cathy Wickswat of Cargill Animal Nutrition explained, "Not only does the Dairy Challenge teach technical knowledge, it excels in helping students to develop people skills."

Farms evaluated at the 2011 competition included Beller Farms, LLC in Carthage, NY, Deer Run Dairy, LLC in Adams, NY and Murcrest Farms, LLC in Copenhagen, NY. All teams also participated in educational workshops at Wood Farms in Clayton, NY and attended an industry career fair. Team-building and fun activities were held throughout the weekend to encourage networking among students and sponsors.

Teams, which were named after top sponsors of the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge, were ranked as follows:

- **Platinum** – Farm Credit, Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative, Merck Animal Health and Zinpro Corporation
- **Gold** – AgChoice Farm Credit, Alltech, Dairy One, Dairylea Cooperative, DSM Nutritional Products, Elanco Animal Health, Farm Credit Northeast Ag Enhancement, Genex Cooperative, Inc., Kent Nutrition Group and Select Sires, Inc.
- **Silver** – ABS Global, Inc., Cargill, Inc., Cows Come First, Dairy One, Holtz-Nelson Dairy Consultants, New England Jersey Breeders Association, Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Shur-Gain, Table Rock Farm and Woody Hill Farm

University of Maine will host the 2012 Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge. For more information about next year's contest, please contact David Marcinkowski of University of Maine at davidm@umext.maine.edu. You may also contact industry chair Brett Denny of Vermont DHIA at bdenny@vtdhia.org.

To become a sponsor, contact Jan Bitter of Farm Credit East at 800-392-3276 or jan.bitter@farmcrediteast.com. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Contributing sponsor listings are available on the Web site.

The Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge is under the guidance and support of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) which was established in April 2002 as a management contest to incorporate evaluation of all aspects of a specific dairy business. For more information, visit www.dairychallenge.org.

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Photo caption 1: Participants, sponsors and planning committee members of the 2011 Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge.

Photo caption 2: Larry Bardoff of Cornell University and Melissa Boess of Penn State University review farm information.

Photo caption 3: Jacob Brandt of Cornell University takes notes during the farm visit to Beller Farms, LLC.

Photo caption 4: Students evaluate heifer facilities at Murcrest Farms, LLC.

Photo caption 5: Team members achieving platinum honors at 2011 Northeast Dairy Challenge included (from the left), front row: Lauren Williams, Cornell University; Christy Hindman, Penn State University; Melissa Boess, Penn State University; Audrey Ervin, University of Maryland; Lindsey Peterson, University of New Hampshire; back row: Randy Miller, Cornell University; Megan Hathaway, University of Guelph; Larry Bardoff, Cornell University; Matthew Grab, SUNY Cobleskill; Kyle Sudhoff, The Ohio State University – ATI; Hillary Knight, University of Maine; Chelsea Hargrave, Cornell University; Kenneth Nearhoof, Morrisville State College; Eric Winsor, Cornell University; Aubrey Swanson, Delaware Valley College; Andrew Whitney, Vermont Technical College; Seth Ripley, Morrisville State College; Wade Deaken, University of Guelph; Katie Hanehan, Cornell University