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In Its 10th Year, Midwest Dairy Challenge Provides Career Training for College Students

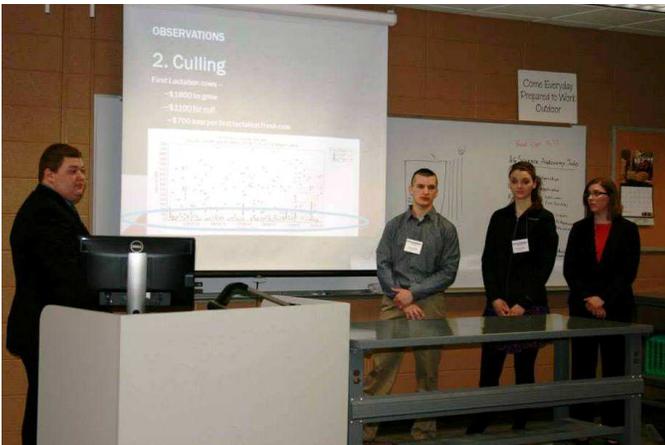
Appleton, Wis., February 10, 2014 – College students had an extra challenge – windchills to -20°F – when they evaluated two northeastern Wisconsin dairy farms as part of the Midwest Dairy Challenge.

The 10th annual Midwest Dairy Challenge, which ran February 5-7, 2014, attracted nearly 60 students from 13 college dairy programs to the event hosted by Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, Wis.

“The frigid temperatures added some difficulty, but these outstanding students rose to the challenge to provide valuable recommendations to the two host dairies,” said contest co-chair Bryan Horn from Novus International, Inc. “Unfortunately some schools could not attend due to the winter storm earlier in the week, but the students who took part show an extremely bright future for the dairy industry.”

This is the first time Fox Valley Technical College hosted the event, which has been in Wisconsin three other times. “The Dairy Challenge is such a positive experience for the college students involved, in developing analytical, teamwork, communication and dairy management skills,” said Kevin Rauchholz, event co-chair and ag instructor at Fox Valley Technical College. “Students learn how to tie farm management decisions with economics, and it’s important to get students and industry together. Students make many good connections through Dairy Challenge.”

Dairy Challenge is an innovative competition developed by industry and university professionals and designed to prepare students for dairy careers. In one national and four regional events – like the Midwest in Appleton – students work in teams to evaluate a provide recommendations for an operating dairy farm. Participants worked in mixed-university teams of four or five students and assessed all farm operations, including facilities, nutrition, financials, reproduction and animal health. Students collaborated on a 20-minute team presentation that detailed observations and suggestions to a panel of judges. Teams were ranked based on how well their evaluations matched the judges’ evaluations of the dairy farm.



The culmination of Dairy Challenge is a presentation of recommendations to the farm owners and judges panel, comprised of industry professionals, financial consultants, veterinarians and dairy producers.



During the Midwest Dairy Challenge, teams took an in-depth view of procedures in the milking parlor.

Host farms were Sugar Creek Farms, New London, Wis., and Country Aire Dairy of Greenleaf, Wis.

Participants traveled to northeast Wisconsin from Ohio, Kansas, South Dakota and many points between. Participating universities and technical schools included Dordt College, Fox Valley Technical College, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Lakeshore Technical College, University of Minnesota, The Ohio State University, Purdue University, South Dakota State University, Southwest Technical College, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Platteville and University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Education and Competition Combine For Innovative Learning

Wisconsin dairy professionals presented educational seminars to help students prepare for their Dairy Challenge task and gain more real-world experience. Sessions were presented by:

- **Gary Sipiorski, Vita Plus:** What Does a Financial Consultant Look For?
- **Molly Sloan, Alta Genetics:** Analyzing Reproductive Performance
- **Dan Gitter, Greenstone Farm Credit:** Farm Financial Analysis from a Banker's Perspective
- **Dr. David LaCount, Purina Animal Nutrition:** Finding Opportunities, Eliminating Bottlenecks
- **Dale Beaty, Wisconsin Farm Bureau:** Team Building through Group Management of a Dairy
- **Shelly Mayer, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW):** Effective Leadership through Active Listening



A student visits with representatives from Select Sires, a sponsor of Dairy Challenge since its start in 2002.

Throughout the event, students networked with industry professionals and volunteers. Representatives from many Platinum sponsors, including several searching for both interns and full-time employees, were also available for a career fair held on Friday.

Teams were named for top-level sponsors, with judges selecting two teams as first place winners. On Farm 1, team Cooperative Resources International was awarded first place. On Farm 2, judges selected team Renaissance Nutrition for the top award.

A complete list of Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge contest participants and their placing can be found at www.dairychallenge.org/mw_event.php.



Capturing first place on Farm 1 was the "Cooperative Resources International" team. Front (left to right) are team members Ryan Pralle, UW-Madison, and Andrew Plumski, Minnesota. In back are Heather Smith, Purdue; Jessie Hammerand, Iowa State; and Jamie Pfaff, UW-River Falls.



Earning the top honor on Farm 2 was the "Renaissance Nutrition, Inc." team. Front (left to right) are team members Max Luchterhand, UW-Madison, and Kristopher Boucher, Kansas State. In back are Veronica Hilton, Purdue; Kara Uhlenhake, Ohio State; and Kristin Leiteritz, Lakeshore Technical College.

About Dairy Challenge

NAIDC is an innovative two-day competition for students representing dairy science programs at North American universities. Its mission is to facilitate education, communication and an exchange of ideas among students, agribusiness, dairy producers and universities that enhances the development of the dairy industry and its leaders. Over its 13-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare over 4000 students for careers as dairy owners or managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals.

The 2014 national competition and Dairy Challenge Academy will be April 3-5 in Fort Wayne, Ind., and hosted by Michigan State University, Ohio State University and Purdue University. Four regional contests are held in late fall and winter; details are at www.dairychallenge.org .

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