

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Georgia Hosts Southern Regional Dairy Challenge®

The Rock Eagle 4-H Center in Eatonton, Georgia was home base for the 2023 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge held November 16 to 18. The event was hosted by the University of Georgia. Fifty-six dairy students from 11 colleges worked to improve their dairy management and communication skills, networked with other students, and explored industry careers. Dairy Challenge is a unique, real-world experience where dairy students work as a team and apply their college coursework to evaluate and provide solutions for an operating dairy farm. The events were coordinated by the southern regional planning committee.

Teams were compiled from different universities into four and five member teams. Teams competed for awards based on their quality of farm analysis and appropriate solutions. Their farm presentations were evaluated by a panel of four judges, including dairy producers, veterinarians, finance specialists and seasoned agribusiness personnel.

Dairy Challenge Applies Learning to a Real-World Dairy

The three-day event began with learning stations at W Dairy, where the farm team and industry representatives helped students better understand Georgia dairy conditions and shared details about reproduction, cow comfort, rotary milking parlors and nutrition. Back at the Rock Eagle 4-H Center, students participated in educational seminars and enjoyed dinner.

Day One concluded with the contest participants receiving in-depth management data from the contest dairy, Godfrey Dairy. The next day, all students had a short time – only two hours – to visit the contest dairy and witness dairy operations. After a question-answer session with the farm owners, the student teams developed recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, cow comfort, and labor and financial management.

On Day Three, students presented their recommendations to two groups of judging panels, visited with sponsors at the Career Fair, and learned through a career panel. As the third day ended, the following teams were announced as first place winners.

Group 1: Team 3 – Select Sires, Inc. – team members were Margaret Brady (University of Tennessee), Tanner Garrick (Clemson University), Syniyah Brandon (North Carolina A&T State University), and Emma Bates (West Virginia University).
Group 2: Team 9 – Genex Cooperative – team members were Julian Koopman (North Carolina State University), Sophie Dupont (University of Georgia), Taylor Hancock (Clemson University), Shaniya Medlin (North Carolina A&T State University), and Morgan Simpson (University of Mount Olive).

Total Industry Effort

The host farms opened their farms for analysis and in exchange, received a wealth of ideas from students and judges. The farms for the 2023 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge were:

- **W Dairy**, Madison, Georgia (pre-contest tour farm)
- **Godfrey Dairy**, Madison, Georgia (contest farm)

This event would not have been possible without Dr. Jillian Bohlen at the University of Georgia and Dr. Elizabeth Eckelkamp, Southern Region Dairy Challenge Chair, the southern regional planning committee, and all the gracious sponsors, mentors and volunteers.

About Dairy Challenge

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge 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, agribusiness and university personnel. Over its 21-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 9,000 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians, or other dairy professionals. The next national event will be hosted in Visalia, California, April 4-6, 2024. Four regional events are held in late fall and winter; details are at www.dairychallenge.org.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:



2023 Southern Regional Full Group Photo

Coming from 11 colleges, 56 students participated in the three-day Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, held November 16-18 in Eatonton, GA.



1st Place: Team 3 Select Sires, Inc.

Back: Margaret Brady, Tanner Garrick
Front: Syniyah Brandon, Emma Bates



2023 First Place Team Group 1

Caption: Earning first place honors at the 2023 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge® for group 1 was team 3.

Back Row: Margaret Brady (University of Tennessee), Tanner Garrick (Clemson University)

Front Row: Syniyah Brandon (North Carolina A&T State University), Emma Bates (West Virginia University)



1st Place: Team 9 GENEX Cooperative

Back: Julian Koopman, Sophie Dupont

Front: Taylor Hancock, Shaniya Medlin, Morgan Simpson



2023 First Place Team Group 2

Caption: Earning first place honors at the 2023 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge® for group 2 was team 9.

Back Row: Julian Koopman (North Carolina State University), Sophie Dupont (University of Georgia)

Front Row: Taylor Hancock (Clemson University), Shaniya Medlin (North Carolina A&T State University), Morgan Simpson (University of Mount Olive).



2023 Southern Regional host contest dairy team with Dr. Jillian Bohlen, University of Georgia



2023 Southern Regional Presentation Prep

Caption: Dairy Challenge students collaborate with their teams to make a presentation to present to a panel of judges. Presentations focus on farm overview, strengths and identifying areas of opportunity.