

NAIDC RULES & REGULATIONS for REGIONAL CONTESTS

(Southern Version Updated September 11, 2025)

NORTH AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE DAIRY CHALLENGE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The National Board of Directors is the official organization that sets the rules and regulations for the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge Contests. All segments of the industry can have input by communicating with Board representatives. The Board of Directors can change the rules for future enhancements to the contest and develop regional or other events to enhance the educational experience. The Board of Directors Officers, Permanent Committee Chairs, Host Schools, Judges and Local Coordinators are selected by this group and follow the rules and regulations as defined by the Board of Directors. The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge is a 501-C3 non-profit organization. The organization has a complete set of by-laws and rules for its structure, allowing it to perform its mission.

MISSION

Develop tomorrow's dairy industry leaders to foster a sustainable future by providing educational, professional growth, and networking opportunities for students, dairy producers, agribusiness, and academic personnel.

REGIONAL CONTEST SUPERINTENDENT

The Regional Contest Superintendent is the elected Chairman of the Regional Steering Committee. The Superintendent shall see that all rules and regulations governing the contest are duly carried out and that the contest is conducted with fairness to all concerned. The Superintendent along with the NAIDC Executive Director and the Officers of the Regional Steering Committee shall decide all questions that may arise in connection with interpretation of the rules.

ENTRIES

Registration is to be completed online. This is the only method of registration. Online entries must be completed by the stated deadline.

A registration fee of **\$50.00 per student** must accompany the entry. Fees may be paid by credit card at time of entry, or there is an option to pay by check. This check should be made out to North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) and is due at time of registration. The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge is a 501-C3 entity and therefore contributions are tax deductible as defined by tax law.

The number of students per school is limited to **five (5)** although additional students may be identified in case we have fewer than the contest limit. Priority will be given to the schools who previously expressed interest in participating based on responses to inquiries in the summer.

Important Reminder: Students will be responsible for completing a single online Student Information Form - coaches *do not* have to collect and submit student forms. **Students must submit this form by the stated deadline.** This form will be available on the Southern Contest tab at <https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/>. Students will also be responsible for uploading a current resume to the link on the Southern Contest tab by the stated deadline. Students who miss the deadline without prior permission will be canceled from the event.

The signing of the Contestant Liability Waiver, Contest Information Release Waiver, and the Contestant Honor Code

are part of the online Student Information Form. An acknowledgment with room reservations and final contest schedule will be sent to schools with accepted registrations in early November. Entry fees will not be refunded unless the school is not allowed to attend because of size restrictions.

ROOMS and MEALS

Each team will be allocated one room for a coach (shared) and rooms for students for two nights. Contest activities will end on the last afternoon giving schools the opportunity to travel home that evening.

Please note, in order to keep costs down and to facilitate interactions, participants may be placed in rooms with participants (within gender) from other schools. Coaches may also be similarly paired up. If teams require more rooms than this allocation, they must inform contest management of the need for additional rooms and schools will be responsible for paying for the extra rooms. **Due to deadlines imposed by the hotel for rooming lists and to ensure the contest flows smoothly, no changes may be made to students participating after the registration deadline.** If there is a reason for cancellation of a room(s), contest management MUST be notified at least 3 days prior to the contest or that school will be held responsible for that room(s). In addition, if the team is going to miss any other scheduled meal functions it should notify contest management. **Extra coaches (more than one) must pay for additional rooms and an additional fee to cover the cost of meals.**

CONTEST WAIVER

Teams and participating individuals, by virtue of voluntarily entering, will be authorizing North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge management the rights to use their photos, comments and images to support and promote the contest. Each contestant **will be required** to sign a liability waiver and Ethics Pledge as part of their entry. They **may** also sign a waiver for release of limited personal information.

ELIGIBILITY OF CONTESTANTS

Each participant in these North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge events must be a student in a North American educational institution that offers a bachelor's degree in agriculture with classes that have emphasis in dairy production during the academic year of the contest. A contestant must be enrolled in coursework at that institution at the time of the contest and have completed one year or equivalent of course work.

Students, with or without a bachelor's degree, enrolled in graduate or professional studies programs are not eligible. A student is ineligible to participate if he/she has (1) competed in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge National Contest, or (2) been an employee or paid consultant of any agricultural organization or service for which his/her duties included on-farm dairy consulting (excluding internships). A contestant may only participate/compete in two regional contests, two Dairy Challenge Academies, and one National Dairy Challenge contest. Students who participated in 2 regionals at a 2-year school, then transferred to a 4-year school will still have eligibility to participate in another regional. This would allow these transfer students the opportunity to participate in a total of 3 regionals, 2 academies, 1 national contest.

If the eligibility of any contestant is protested such protest must be made in writing and presented to the contest superintendent on the morning of the contest before the contest begins. The protest must be accompanied by a check for \$50. If the protest is sustained the \$50 will be returned. In case the protest is not sustained, the \$50 shall be forfeited.

TEAMS

Teams at regional events shall consist of four to six members. The teams will be made up of individuals from

different schools that will be assigned to a team with the use of a student skills' assessment or randomly assigned to an aggregate team by contest management. All team members will participate in all activities of the team.

Schools are not allowed to bring student observers or extra students to the contest unless the extra students are invited by contest management.

Judging System

A panel of four or five judges (Approved by the Program Committee) will hear all of the presentations and make the final rankings. If the number of teams entered indicates that additional farm visits and panels of judges are necessary to expedite the hearing of presentations, they will be appointed as needed prior to the contest beginning. The judging panel shall consist of members who have dairy expertise in the fields of; dairy production, nutrition, reproduction, genetics, housing, finance, nutrient management, milking procedures and on farm consulting.

The judging panel will follow the Dairy Challenge scorecard to arrive at the final rankings. The judging panel will provide oral feedback for each team and coach after the conclusion of their presentation. However final ratings are decided at the end of the contest.

Dairy Challenge Scorecard

TEAM # _____

1. Material presented - 55 points		Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Farm Overview General overview of the farm operation (1 point) Benchmarking of relevant key performance indicators (financial and performance) with regional or national metrics (4 points)	5	5	4	3	2	1
Assessment Clear understanding of farm’s goals (5 points) Identification of relevant opportunities within context of the farm’s goals, financial position and KPI's (10 points) Justification for importance of opportunities based on provided data or information obtained during the farm visit (10 points)	25	21 - 25	16 - 20	11 - 15	6 - 10	1 - 5
Recommendations Recommendations are justified and ranked based on economic significance, farm’s goals, and sustainability of the business (e.g., environmental factors, animal welfare, ownership succession planning) (15 points) Recommendations are practical with a clear implementation strategy (10 points)	25	21 - 25	16 - 20	11 - 15	6 - 10	1 - 5
2. Presentation and visual aids - 20 points		Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Presence Enthusiastic, confident and professional (5 points) Spoke clearly with appropriate volume, speed, grammar and eye contact (10 points)	15	13 - 15	10 - 12	7 - 9	4 - 6	1 - 3
Slide Formatting Legible, organized, void of excessive wordiness. Images and data provide clear illustrations (5 points)	5	5	4	3	2	1
3. Preparation and organization - 10 points		Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
 Presentation and engagement by all team members (4 points) Knowledge of farm practices by all team members (4 points) Effective use of the 20 minute time allocation. Presentation will be stopped at 20 minutes (2 points)	10	9 - 10	7 - 8	5 - 6	3 - 4	1 - 2
4. Response to questions - 15 points		Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
 Provided confident and concise answers to questions (5 points) Provided an effective summary of relevant supporting information (5 points) All team members involved in answering at least one question (5 points)* *Team members may confer briefly but no lengthy conferences	15	13 - 15	10 - 12	7 - 9	4 - 6	1 - 3

Total - 100 points

TEAM'S SCORE _____

Judges Comments:

What was the highlight of this presentation?

What could be changed to make it better?

Additional comments (if any):

METHOD OF CONDUCT OF THE CONTEST

GENERAL RULES

Team members may NOT wear clothing with their School's name or logo during the National contest. Students may wear school clothing at the regionals. Contestants will be required to sign an ethics pledge and abide by it. Each team will work independently with no aid from coaches. Contestants cannot use cell phones during the contest. **Students may use the Internet.**

COMPUTERS

Please refer to the Computer Requirements page for specific Software and Hardware Minimums for this contest. A failure to meet these requirements will at a minimum be a major hindrance to team performance and may at worst render the team non-competitive.

Materials and Data

Schools should bring calculators, measuring tapes, stop watches, pens, clipboards and clean notepads for students. Additional measuring tapes may be available from contest management. No other equipment will be allowed. **Cell phones are not permitted during the farm tour for any purpose.**

The teams will be provided with electronic data Dairy Comp and PCDART formats including necessary data for an analysis of an operating farm and their herd management practices. The data will be the real on-farm data or when not available from the farm will be simulated real farm data provided by contest management.

The data shall consist of farm goals, financial statistics, cost details or estimates, standard operating procedures, ration formulations for all feeding groups, feed inventories, housing dimensions and characteristics, manure or nutrient management, milking procedures and equipment specifications, reproductive data, ancestry identification if available, production records, and herd summaries with a history of production characteristics for the last 2-3 years.

The data will be provided using standard industry formats and in selected computer formats. Available computer formats are Dairy Comp 305, PCDART. **The teams may use ONE or more of the data formats** and great care is taken to see that the same data is available on each software platform and there is no advantage of one source over the other. In some cases, the data sets are not perfect because they are real data sets. Often in the real world you will run into imperfect or conflicting data sets. **The judges' panels receive identical data sets as the contestants.**

A sample data set or a video of previous top-ranking presentations can be provided on request prior to the contest for interested teams that have never participated. These materials should be used for training and coaching opportunities to prepare for the contest. Samples of explanatory information can also be requested from Dairy Comp 305 or PCDART.

Biosecurity

These steps are recommended for reasons of proper animal hygiene.

- All contest members are required to wear plastic boots (provided) for each farm visit and should be wearing clean protective clothing.
- Avoid contact with all farm animals for five days prior to the contest.
- Any individual who has been in contact with infected farms or animals should have no contact with

wild or domestic animals at least 10 days before arriving at the contest and must be wearing different protective clothing.

Structure of Visits

By analyzing the data provided each team will have already prioritized the farm areas needing a detailed examination. Each farm visit will consist of 120 minutes with each team deciding how to allocate their members and time to cover all areas of the farm. The judge's panel should arrive at the farm at the same time. At each area of the farm there **will be assistant superintendents to answer questions, monitor the students, and provide directions when needed.** Students are not allowed to ask the dairyman or their employees any questions while on their visit, because employees can give different answers to various team members or misleading answers.

Students will be allowed to examine most areas of the dairy but for biosecurity will not have access to all areas. All teams will be allowed to participate in a group questioning of the farm manager or consultant to get necessary information about the data already provided and the visit. The judges' panel will also have an interview with the manager to determine their official recommendations. The judge's panel will ask the farm manager questions that pertain to their herd goals, their herd observations, and information in the herd data sets provided.

Group Manager Interviews

In the afternoon, each of the teams will be allowed to question the farm manager in a large group setting to get additional specific information about the facts in the data sets already provided, the herd manager's goals and other observations during their visit. Teams will have the opportunity to ask questions, one at a time by team number, continuing to rotate through the teams until the time is up. Moderators will be present during this session to exclude contestant questions that call for a conclusion on the part of the manager. A contestant will be asked to rephrase a question if it is deemed inappropriate. Later the moderator should inform them why it was inappropriate to ask the question in that way.

The judges' panel will be allocated 30 minutes to ask questions of the manager immediately prior to the team interviews.

Time Management

One of the objectives of the contest is to mirror what happens to consultants in the real world of on- farm consulting. Therefore, strict time allocations are followed, which are similar to what consultants would be given by a real farm manager. Time management and prioritization of questions are very important.

Teams will participate in a group interview session with the manager of the farm. Questions should be detailed and highly prioritized. After the interview, teams will have the rest of the afternoon to prepare their presentation. Each team will be asked to turn in their final presentation on a specific time schedule. This schedule allows two things: 1.) The ability for the contest management to make sure they have correctly downloaded the presentations to the machines for projection on the next day, and 2.) That all teams have similar amounts of time for preparation after their interview with the manager. Past contestants have indicated that the interview with the manager is the time when the most important information is received that should be highlighted in their presentations.

Time management is very important in your preparation. Your team has approximately 1.5 hours to view a dairy, 6 hours to view the data and 4 hours to prepare a presentation to a potential dairy manager on how they could help him/her improve their dairy. This is less than some contestants prefer, but again more than a consultant would use in the real world.

Managing time is highly important in giving your presentations as well.

PRESENTATIONS

Each team will be asked to provide a presentation to a panel of four or five judges that recommends improvements to the operation of the dairy and/or its finances. Each team will COMPLETE their presentations on the first day and will deliver their FINAL PRESENTATIONS, all computer files, all presentation materials or copies, and university computers to the contest management on that AFTERNOON. This is done to encourage contestants to network with sponsors and other contestants that night instead of working on their presentations.

Each team will be assigned to morning or afternoon presentation sessions. Presentation order of the possible teams will be by random draw. Each team will follow in order at 60-minute intervals until all teams have given their presentations.

The presentations should be designed as if the team was making a presentation to the farm owner or manager. It is not necessary to describe the farm to the person who owns the farm as an introduction. Begin discussing benchmarks or important outcomes of your evaluation as soon as possible.

EACH TEAM CAN USE ACTUAL STUDENT NAMES and should provide a team photo in their presentation slides. Only team numbers, **not school names** should be included in their presentation.

Every team must use farm names provided and **must not use any real names of farms, or last names of managers or owners.**

Each team will be allowed 20 minutes for their presentation with notices from a timer when 5 minutes and 2 minutes are left in their 20-minute time limit. Time limits are strictly enforced and teams will be stopped even if the presentation is not complete. An additional 10 minutes will follow for questions from the judges' panel. **All team members must speak during some part of the presentation and during the question session.** Teams are allowed to confer briefly; but a long conference will be penalized, and teams choosing not to confer will not be penalized for this choice.

Every team will have access to PowerPoint, a laser pointer, and a projection machine to aid with their presentation. All coach(es) will be allowed to view each team's presentation. A part of the room will also be open to sponsors for viewing the presentations. All spectators will be prohibited from entering or leaving a room until the entire presentation is complete.

After every presentation the judges' panel will privately rate each team against the scorecard. Each team and their coach(es) will then be invited back for a ten-minute session where the judges comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation. Coaches are asked to take notes of these comments. After all presentations are complete a final rating will be given to each team. A summary of the judges' evaluation for each farm visit will also be provided at the end of the contest.

Filing a Complaint

In the event that any coach or team would like to make a formal complaint about the conduct of a Dairy Challenge Contest, the following actions must be taken. The complaining party must send a complete written explanation of the issues surrounding the complaint to the NAIDC Executive Director. The Executive Director will discretely investigate all aspects of the alleged complaint to determine the legitimacy of the complaint. If the complaint is found valid by the Executive Director, they must bring the complaint to the NAIDC Executive Committee for further action. The Executive Committee can alleviate the concerns of the complaining party and/or take further steps to correct any actionable problems identified during this process to avoid future problems.

Student Networking with Students and Sponsors and Social Activities

Each contestant will be required to fill out a student information form providing biographical data to allow ample networking opportunities. Each contestant will have the opportunity to network with fellow contestants and company representatives of the various sponsors. Several meal functions will also be provided to enhance networking opportunities. The contestant summary will be provided to all contestants, coaches, and sponsors to allow post contest contact and future networking. In addition, representatives of each sponsor will have the opportunity to view the presentations of the teams to watch the students in action. This should provide an excellent opportunity for each contestant and sponsor to maximize his or her ability to network for the future.

Benefits and Awards

Each individual, team or school will receive complimentary rooms for 2-3 nights (reservations will be made from completed entry forms by contest management) and complimentary tickets to each meal function. Please inform contest management if you will not be using all of your allocation.

There will be rankings given to each team. Each participant will receive Dairy Challenge Certificates. Members of the 1st and 2nd Place teams from each host farm division will be announced as the winners.

Team contest photos will be taken of each participating team. The contest results will be available to all sponsors, published in local farm publications and in several prominent national agriculture publications. The top teams in each division will be featured on the Dairy Challenge website www.dairychallenge.org.

Please acknowledge all the Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze sponsors and Emerald and Diamond Dairies for their generous support of this great event.
A sponsor contact list is provided at the contest to aid your response.