



20th Annual Southern Regional Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge

November 16 - 18, 2025

Knoxville, Tennessee

Hosted by University of Tennessee and Middle Tennessee State University

To register: <https://2025SouthernRegionalDairyChallengeVolunteerRegistration.eventbrite.com>

Registration deadline: November 1, 2025

Thank you for your continued support of Dairy Challenge. In appreciation for your donation, it is our privilege to invite sponsors from **both the Southeast and Midwest** to participate in the 20th Annual Southern Regional Dairy Challenge. This year's event will be hosted by University of Tennessee and Middle Tennessee State University at Holiday Inn West Knoxville Cedar Bluff in Knoxville, Tennessee, and will include **schools from both the Southeast and Midwest**.

If you have not yet sent in your sponsorship for this contest year, please do so by November 1, 2025 to ensure recognition during the event. You may donate using a credit card online at: <https://www.dairychallenge.org/sponsors/donate.php>

SPONSOR PARTICIPATION:

We are building our list of volunteers to help with this year's expanded event planned for Sunday evening through Tuesday afternoon. Being involved and working directly with the students gives you a first-hand view of the students in action, plus a large volunteer pool helps the contest run smoothly. Volunteer opportunities range from serving as a team mentor or judge to serving as a career panelist or timekeeper in a presentation room. You can indicate your interest on the [Sponsor Volunteer Registration Form](#) posted on the Southern Regional tab at <https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/> **Please forward a copy of this email to others who may be interested in supporting the Dairy Challenge.**

CONTEST OVERVIEW:

Students will arrive in Knoxville on Sunday afternoon November 16 for a pre-event farm tour near Knoxville (location TBA) where they will participate in a series of volunteer led learning stations. Teams will return to the Holiday Inn on Sunday evening for dinner and team building, after which students will meet their team mentors and receive information about the host farm. Orientation meetings for team mentors, volunteers and judges will be held Sunday evening.

The next day (Monday, November 17) participants will travel to the host farm to examine facilities and animals. That afternoon, team members will interview herd managers and develop a farm analysis identifying areas of strength and opportunity. Student teams prepare a PowerPoint presentation to include appropriate recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing, and financial management while considering the specific goals of the farm. A fun evening with sponsors and students is being planned for Monday night.

The final day (Tuesday, November 18) is set for presentations with each team making recommendations and fielding questions from a panel of industry judges. Presentations are evaluated based on farm analysis and recommendations. Students will attend educational workshops and meet with sponsors when they are not presenting.

SCHEDULE:

A listing of the scheduled events for this year's contest will be posted on the Southern Regional tab at <https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/>

SPONSOR VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION:

Please complete a registration for each volunteer from your company using the online [Sponsor Volunteer Registration form](https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/) posted on the Southern Regional tab at <https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/> Forms are due November 1, 2025.

HOTEL:

For your convenience, a block of Dairy Challenge volunteer rooms has been reserved at [Holiday Inn West Knoxville Cedar Bluff, 9134 Executive Park Dr, Knoxville, TN 37923](#). Rooms in the Dairy Challenge block are \$109 per night and includes breakfast. Reservation deadline is November 1, 2025. After this date the hotel will accept reservations on a space and rate available basis.

** Note to invited contest judges: hotel reservations will be made for you at Holiday Inn.*

[Holiday Inn West Knoxville Cedar Bluff](#)

9134 Executive Park Dr
Knoxville, TN 37923

Reservations link: [2025 Regional Dairy Challenge](#) (enter dates to access group rate)

Hotel front desk: [1-865-693-1011](tel:1-865-693-1011)

Group name: Dairy Challenge

Arrival date: 11/16/2025

Departure date: 11/18/2025

Room rate: \$109+tax/room/night (includes breakfast)

Last date of booking: 11/01/2025

MEALS:

We encourage our sponsors to join students during meals on **Sunday, Monday and Tuesday**. To partially defray the cost for sponsors' meals, we kindly ask that you purchase meals tickets for \$20/meal for each lunch and dinner you plan to join (breakfast is included with your room rate). Meals tickets are available for purchase with your registration.

MENTORS:

We are seeking a large number of volunteers to serve as TEAM MENTORS. This is an important role as Mentors work side by side with the student teams to guide them through the farm analysis process. This is a premium networking opportunity! With enough volunteers, we hope to assign 2 mentors to each team. If you are interested in serving as a Mentor, indicate as such when registering. Please note:

- **Mentors who wish to be assigned to a team should be available for the Mentor Meeting Sunday evening at 4:30 PM through the end of presentations at 3:00 PM Tuesday.** Staying for the entire event (through presentations on Tuesday) provides cohesiveness for your team and allows for even more interaction with students. Mentors will review data with students Sunday evening, tour the dairy on Monday morning, offer guidance while assembling their presentation on Monday afternoon, then on Tuesday oversee team prep, direct your team to their presentation room, be present during the presentation, be their guide to debriefing, and there to celebrate their achievements.
- Each team will be given a camera for taking photos at the farm. We ask mentors to also bring a camera or camera-capable phone to help take pictures for their groups and be willing/able to download the pictures if needed.
- **Mentors should be committed to the event and willing to work with students in a positive and supportive manner, encouraging participation and guiding them in their dairy assessment.**

Qualities of a Good Mentor

- ✓ Relevant Expertise or Knowledge
 - ✓ Enthusiasm for Sharing That Expertise
 - ✓ A Respectful Attitude
 - ✓ Eagerness to Invest in Others
 - ✓ Ability to Give Honest & Direct Feedback
 - ✓ Reflective Listening & Empathy
 - ✓ Willingness to be a Sponsor
- Those interested in serving as a Mentor but are not able to commit to the entire event have the option to register as a ROAMING MENTOR. You will not be assigned to a team but instead support Team Mentors as needed.

If you are interested in serving as a Mentor, indicate as such when registering via the [volunteer registration form](#). If you have any questions about mentoring, please contact Melanie Herman, Mentor Coordinator, at (321) 624-9118, mherman@premierselect.com.

PRECONTEST TOUR LEARNING STATIONS:

On Sunday, November 16 we are offering a pre-contest tour from 2-4 PM at Little River Farm, 3229 Ellejoy Rd, Walland, TN for early arriving schools. We are inviting volunteers to assist us by

leading learning stations set up throughout the dairy. You can indicate your interest in presenting at a learning station on the [volunteer registration form](#).

INDUSTRY PANEL:

On Tuesday November 18 we will feature alumni/industry panels (one in the morning, one in the afternoon). These panels are your opportunity to share career insights and are highly interactive and a favorite among students. Alumni of Dairy Challenge are especially encouraged to sign up to serve on these panels.

There are several other areas where assistance is needed including:

- Monday November 17: farm guides in the morning, manager interviews in the afternoon
- Tuesday November 18: presentation room and debriefing volunteers both morning and afternoon.

Please indicate your interest when completing the [volunteer registration form](#).

SPONSOR DISPLAYS:

On Tuesday morning, sponsors are invited to set up a table-top display in our Career & Innovation Fair. Displays will be open between 8:30 AM and 2:00 PM EST. Indicate your desire to reserve a table using the [volunteer registration form](#). Tables are included (no charge) with your sponsorship. Display space includes a six-foot table and access to electricity (you will need to supply your own electrical cords). All sponsors are encouraged to interact with students and university coaches, and view student presentations on Tuesday. Note, because of the number of teams, presentations will be going on simultaneously. This is a great recruiting and networking opportunity to meet with the anticipated 70-80 students from top university programs across the Southeast and Midwest.

MONDAY NIGHT STUDENT SPONSOR MIXER AT THE MAIN EVENT:

On Monday night, please join us for a fun night of bowling, billiards, laser tag, food, and networking at Main Event, a place to compete, eat and play. Tickets for this evening are \$20 per person and include food and games with students for the evening. This is a great recruiting opportunity to get to know the students, coaches and industry peers in a fun, relaxed, informal setting.

DAIRY CHALLENGE GEAR:

Show your support for Dairy Challenge by ordering a Dairy Challenge t-shirt when you register. Orders will be shipped to the event and can be picked up during registration. Orders will close November 1, 2025.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- Register: using the online Sponsor Volunteer Registration form posted at <https://2025SouthernRegionalDairyChallengeVolunteerRegistration.eventbrite.com>
There you can indicate your interest in serving as a volunteer, reserving table in our career fair, order a shirt, sign up for meals and more. Forms are due **November 1, 2025**.

- Book your hotel: A block of Dairy Challenge volunteer rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn West Knoxville Cedar Bluff, 9134 Executive Park Dr., Knoxville, TN 37923. Rooms in the Dairy Challenge block are \$109.00 per night. Reservation deadline is **November 1, 2025**

If you have questions about volunteering at the event, please communicate with volunteer coordinator Stephanie Ward, (919) 602-1100, shward@ncsu.edu. Thank you for your support!