



Department of Animal & Dairy Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Dear Dairy Producer,

Every day, you invest in the future of your dairy through genetics, facilities, technology, and most importantly, people. As our industry faces workforce challenges, developing the next generation of dairy employees, managers, consultants, and industry leaders has never been more important.

I am writing to ask for your support in sponsoring students to attend the **2026 Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge** in Green Bay, WI on November 18-20. Approximately 120 students from four-year universities and technical colleges across the Upper Midwest will participate, including students from UW-Madison, UW-River Falls, UW-Platteville, and Wisconsin technical college programs.

Dairy Challenge provides a hands-on, real-world learning experience where students evaluate a commercial dairy, analyze records, interview managers, identify opportunities for improvement, and present recommendations to industry judges. Students also build valuable relationships with dairy producers, agribusiness professionals, and potential employers.

One of the unique aspects of the regional contest is that students are assigned to teams with participants from other colleges and universities. This mirrors the reality of today's dairy industry, where success depends on working effectively with different teams of employees and industry professionals. Through this experience, students strengthen both their dairy management knowledge and the critical soft skills of teamwork, communication, leadership, and problem-solving.

As a coach for the UW-Madison Dairy Challenge team for the past three years, I can personally attest to the impact of this program. I have seen students develop stronger technical, communication, and problem-solving skills while expanding professional networks that directly influence their careers. In my experience, the real-world experience and industry networking provided by Dairy Challenge are unmatched by any other student program.

Industry and dairy producer sponsorships make this opportunity possible, with participation averaging approximately **\$650 per student**. By sponsoring a student, you are investing directly in the future workforce that will serve dairy farms in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest for years to come.

Please consider sponsoring a student – it's easy to do so by using the QR code on the enclosed flyer. If you choose to contribute, be sure and designate your gift for the Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge event. Thank you for investing in the next generation of dairy leaders. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at eronk@wisc.edu.

Sincerely,

Eric Ronk
Teaching Faculty I

Department of Animal & Dairy Sciences

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Sponsor a student for the
Midwest Dairy Challenge Regional Contest
to continue the high-impact training of tomorrow's dairy leaders.
November 18-20, 2026, Green Bay, WI



Dairy Challenge is a partnership with industry, producers and universities in the region whose goal is building a workforce that is well prepared to face the challenges of the dairy industry. Dairy Challenge promotes skill development for students related to applied dairy management, teamwork, communication and problem-solving. There will be 120 students attending this year's regional contest in Green Bay from 15 upper Midwest universities and colleges. Students' attendance is fully funded through the generosity of industry support, which totals nearly \$650 per student for the 3-day event.



At a regional Dairy Challenge, students work as a mixed team to:

- 1) Learn how to evaluate a modern dairy through a farm visit, record analysis and interviews with owner or manager.
- 2) Identify strengths and opportunities for the dairy.
- 3) Present recommendations to a panel of judges.
- 4) Teams include dairy industry mentors who work directly with students to guide them as they analyze and develop recommendations.
- 5) Meet with key sponsors about career opportunities and new technologies.



The following producer sponsorship levels are available:

\$1,000 Diamond Sponsorship

\$650 Sponsor a Student



**Lambeau Field:
 Site of Thursday
 night's student/
 sponsor mixer**

Join the growing list of NAIDC sponsors and make your gift on-line by scanning the QR code

For questions and additional information, contact: Kristi Fiedler, (920) 737-7640 or Ted Halbach (608) 219-5289.