
NORTH AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE DAIRY CHALLENGE

RULES and REGULATIONS for DAIRY CHALLENGE EVENTS

Rev 03/09/2026

NAIDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The 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. This Board can change the rules for future enhancements to the contest and develop regional or other events to enhance the educational experience. The Board of Director 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.

CONTEST SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent is the elected Chairperson of the Program 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 Officers of the Board of Directors shall decide all questions that may arise in connection with interpretation of the rules.

ENTRIES

An entry form must be completed online by date stated on entry form. Entry Fee: \$100 per student. Entry fees are not refundable after the entry deadline. The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge is a 501-C3 entity and therefore contributions are tax deductible as defined by tax law.

The national contest is limited to the first 32 teams who register, with the possibility of accepting up to 36 teams. If the number of teams submitting complete entry forms and payment exceeds the contest limit by the stated deadline, date and time of receipt and previous participation in the regional and national programs will determine priority to select up to an absolute maximum of 36 teams. After the deadline, teams will be selected by date and time of receipt and random draw up to the contest limit.

A maximum of 150 students will be accepted for the Academy. Completed entries will receive priority by receipt (date and time) and previous regional or national participation if size limits are reached.

An acknowledgment will be sent to schools with accepted registrations shortly after the entry deadline.

Entries received after the entry deadline are not eligible for travel awards. Travel stipends are not offered to Academy participants.

ROOMS AND MEALS

Schools will be allocated rooms for students for up to three nights based on the number of students total (both contest and academy) participating from your school. Student rooms within the allocation (refer to the Housing Reservation Information on the web site) will be paid for by Dairy Challenge. **Schools are responsible for making their own housing reservations for students and coaches. Reservation instructions will be sent with acceptance to the contest or Academy and will be posted on the Dairy Challenge web site.** If schools are not going to stay all three nights, please indicate as such when making the reservation. If schools require more rooms than this allocation, they can request them when making the reservation, but they will be responsible for paying for the extra rooms. If there is a reason for cancellation of a room(s), schools are responsible for contacting the hotel to avoid being held responsible for that room(s). Likewise, if the school is going to miss any other scheduled meal functions, they should notify contest management.

Schools will be responsible for the costs associated with coaches' rooms. Coaches may wish to make arrangements for room sharing. Extra coaches (above one contest and/or one Academy) must pay for the cost of additional meals when registering.

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 Contestant Honor Code. They **may** also sign a waiver for limited release of personal information.

ELIGIBILITY OF CONTESTANTS

National Contest

Each contestant in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge National Contest 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. They must have completed

not less than one year of course work or equivalent by that institution's graduation rules. A student is ineligible to be a contestant 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 student may only participate/compete in two Dairy Challenge Academies, and one National Dairy Challenge contest.

If there is a Technical School or 2-year division, similar rules apply.

If there is a graduate or professional school division or contest, similar rules apply. Once any student has competed in the National Graduate Dairy Challenge, they would not be eligible to compete again.

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.

Regional Events

Each participant in a North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge regional event must be a student in a North American educational institution that offers classes that have emphasis in dairy production. Participants must be enrolled in a program of study to meet the requirements for a bachelor's degree or be enrolled in a dairy/animal degree or certificate granting program and have completed one year or equivalent of course work. A contestant must be enrolled in coursework at that institution at the time of the contest. Students, with or without a bachelor's degree, enrolled in graduate or professional studies programs are not eligible. A student is eligible to compete in a 3rd regional if that student participated in 2 regionals at a 2-year school, then transferred to a 4-year school. That student would be eligible to participate in 3 regionals, 2 academies, and 1 national contest in this case.

Dairy Challenge Academy

Each participant in the Dairy Challenge Academy must be a student in a North American educational institution that offers classes that have emphasis in dairy production. Participants must be enrolled in a program of study to meet the requirements for a bachelor's or graduate degree or be enrolled in a dairy/animal degree or certificate granting program and have completed one year or equivalent collegiate course work. Students, with or without a bachelor's degree, enrolled in graduate or professional studies programs also are eligible. In the event that the size limits for the Academy are reached, preference will be given to undergraduate versus graduate students and undergraduate students participating for the first time. Graduate and undergraduate students may be comingled within the same group assignments.

A student is ineligible to participate in Dairy Challenge Academy if he/she has 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 student who competed in the national contest and as such, has graduated from Dairy Challenge, is eligible to participate in the Academy provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

A student may only participate/compete in 2 regional contests, 2 Dairy Challenge Academies, and 1 National Dairy Challenge contest. Exception to this rule will be made for students who participated in 2 regionals at a 2-year school, then transferred to a 4-year school. Those students will be eligible to participate in another regional at their 4-year school. This would allow these transfer students the opportunity to participate in a total of 3 regionals, 2 academies, 1 national contest.

TEAMS

The national contest is limited to the first 32 school teams who register (with the possibility of accepting up to 36 teams). Each school is limited to one national contest team consisting of four members currently enrolled in an educational institution whose students are eligible for this particular contest. All team members will participate in all activities of the team.

If a school cannot field a full team, they are still invited to participate. Those schools have three options for registration. One would be to identify another school who cannot field a full team, and merge together with that school to register a complete team of 4. Alternatively, they can register an incomplete team, and request to have NAIDC management merge teams and/or complete those teams with extra contestants from schools who are already registering a full team. Substitutions to team entries can be made with contest registration up to the morning of the contest. Finally, registering just a team of three members will be allowed, but those are heavily penalized on total points for not having four members. There is a 25% reduction in total score for having three members (team starts at 75 points). In emergency situations, whereby at the contest a student cannot participate resulting in a team of three presenting, the NAIDC Board will provide direction to the judges on the appropriateness of any penalty.

Formation of Aggregate Teams for National contest:

In the event that a full slate of school contest teams is not registered (i.e. 32 teams), aggregate teams will be formed by NAIDC management to bring the number of teams up to 32 (or 36 if over 32 were registered originally). These teams will be made up of students from schools who either do not have a full contest team or who are additional students from schools with a full contest team.

In the case that such aggregate teams are formed, NAIDC management will form those teams with the following principles in mind:

- teams will be formed with a mixture of students from schools with more and less Dairy Challenge experience and developed Dairy Challenge training programs
- in situations where there are multiple aggregate students from school who already have a registered team of 4 students, those aggregate students will be placed in different competing teams
- teams will be formed trying to minimize time zone differences between participants within team
- teams will be formed as early as possible (minimum 2 weeks prior to the contest) to provide students as much time to prepare together as possible

Aggregate teams will be assigned to each farm division at random, ensuring an equal proportion (or as close to it as possible) of aggregate teams per farm.

At regional contests, aggregate teams will be created consisting of individuals from different schools. Individuals will be assigned to a team with the use of a student skill assessment or randomly assigned to an aggregate team by contest management.

JUDGING SYSTEM

A panel of five judges (approved by the Board of Directors) 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 five 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.

Revised 2024

Dairy Challenge Scorecard

TEAM # _____

1. Material presented - 55 points		Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Farm Overview		5	4	3	2	1
General overview of the farm operation (1 point)	5					
Benchmarking of relevant key performance indicators (financial and performance) with regional or national metrics (4 points)						
Assessment		21 - 25	16 - 20	11 - 15	6 - 10	1 - 5
Clear understanding of farm’s goals (5 points)	25					
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)						
Recommendations		21 - 25	16 - 20	11 - 15	6 - 10	1 - 5
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)	25					
Recommendations are practical with a clear implementation strategy (10 points)						
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 will NOT be permitted to wear clothing with their University's name or logo during the contest. Contestants will be required to sign an ethics pledge and abide by it. Each team will work independently with no aid from coaches or other personnel. **Contestants cannot use cell phones for any purpose during the farm visit.** Contestants will be permitted to access the Internet to obtain resources to aid in preparation of their presentations. In addition, there are no restrictions on the use of pre-planned repositories for contest resources or on what dairy management resources are brought to the contest for use in preparing presentations.

COMPUTERS

Please refer to the Computer Requirements page for specific computer needs as well as 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

Each team will be allowed to bring a calculator, measuring tape, watch/stopwatch, pens and clean notepads. Additional measuring tapes may be available from contest management. No other equipment will be allowed. Cell phones are not permitted during the contest for any purpose. **Contest participating schools should also bring a camera for use on the farm. Use of cell phone, iPad or similar cameras is prohibited at the farms and during the contest.**

Each team will have access to herd data in all three major dairy management programs (DairyComp 305, PCDART and DHI Plus). Each team will also receive the necessary data to analyze an operating farm and their herd management practices. These data may be provided in print or electronic form, using standard industry formats. The data will be the real on-farm data, except when not available from the farm, data may be simulated by contest management to represent the respective farm under evaluation.

The data shall consist of farm goals, financial statistics, standard operating procedures, cost details or estimates, ration formulations for all feeding groups, Penn State particle separator analysis of feed, 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.

Data from management software will be provided in DairyComp 305, PCDART and DHI Plus. **Teams may use one or more of the data formats** and great care will be taken to see that the same data are 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 receive identical data sets as the contestants** and have the same amount of time with the farm manager.

Sample data sets and videos of previous top-ranking presentations are available on the Dairy Challenge website. These materials should be used for training and coaching opportunities to prepare for the contest. Contact Dairy Challenge for information on accessing these materials. Samples of explanatory information can also be requested from DairyComp 305, PCDART and DHI Plus.

POLICY ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the acceptable and prohibited uses of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Copilot, etc) in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) contests (including national contest, academy, and regional events). This policy is designed to protect the confidentiality of farm-provided information, ensure fairness among teams, and uphold the educational objectives of the contests, which emphasize critical thinking, applied knowledge, and student-led analysis.

Scope

This policy applies to all participants, including students, judges, mentors, coaches, and any other individuals supporting participating students and contest teams. Compliance with this policy is a condition of participation in the contest.

Confidentiality Requirements

Participants are provided with confidential farm-specific information, solely for the purposes of the contest. To protect the privacy and interests of participating farms:

- No confidential, farm-specific, or contest-provided materials may be uploaded, entered, copied, or otherwise shared with any generative AI tool or platform.
 - This includes, but is not limited to: production records, financial data, management descriptions, photos, videos, herd data, case materials, or any derived summaries that could reasonably allow reconstruction of the original information.
- Any breach of confidentiality will be considered a serious violation and may result in disqualification.

Permitted Uses of Generative AI

Students may use generative AI tools in a limited and supportive capacity, provided that confidentiality is maintained and original work remains student-driven. Permitted uses include:

- Expanding or brainstorming general ideas (e.g., identifying management considerations, framing recommendations at a conceptual level).
- Improving clarity, grammar, or writing style of text written by the students, without adding new analysis based on confidential information.
- Assisting with general efficiency tasks such as outlining presentations, suggesting slide structures, or generating non-specific templates.
- Supporting learning or understanding of general concepts

Prohibited Uses of Generative AI

The following uses of generative AI are strictly prohibited:

- Uploading or entering any contest materials or farm-specific information into an AI system.
- Using AI to analyze, interpret, summarize, or generate recommendations based on confidential farm data.
- Using AI to generate entire presentation content, analyses, conclusions, or recommendations using confidential farm data or information.
- Using AI to create presentation slides, figures, graphics, or speaker notes using confidential farm data or information, instead of original student-developed materials.

Transparency and Accountability

Contest organizers (NAIDC Board) and judges reserve the right to:

- Ask teams to explain their workflow, decision-making process, or use of AI tools.
- Request clarification on how AI was used in preparing materials.
- Apply penalties, including disqualification, if violations of this policy are identified.

Policy Acknowledgement

By participating in an NAIDC contest, all team members agree to comply with this policy on the use of generative AI, including all confidentiality and originality requirements.

STRUCTURE OF VISITS

The teams will be handled in groups of eight (up to nine) teams per farm visit. By analyzing the data provided at the start of the contest, 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 time to cover all areas of the farm. The judges 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 dairy owner or employees any questions while on the visit, as employees can give different answers to different team members or misleading answers.** Students will be allowed to examine most areas of the dairy, but for bio-security reasons, they may not have access to all areas. Each team will then be allowed to participate in a group questioning of the farm manager or consultant for 15 minutes to get necessary information about the data provided and the visit. They will then return to the contest headquarters to prepare for individual interviews and their presentations. The judges' panel will have a separate interview with the manager to determine their official recommendations. The judges will ask the farm manager questions that pertain to the herd goals, their observations, and information in the data sets provided.

INDIVIDUAL MANAGER INTERVIEWS

In the afternoon, pairs of non-competing teams (a minimum of 2 members per team) will be allowed to question the farm manager for 17 minutes 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. This amount of time mirrors what the average manager would allow for a consultant. Time management is very important, so PLEASE prioritize your questions. Order of the interviews will be by random draw. A timekeeper will enforce the timing. Each team will proceed in order at approximately 20-minute intervals until all teams have had an interview session. Two judges will be present during this session to observe. A moderator will be present 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.

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 throughout the contest.

Each team will be asked to turn in their final presentation on a specific time schedule. This schedule allows contest management to make sure they have correctly downloaded the presentations to the machines for

projection on the next day and allows all teams to have similar amounts of time for preparation after their personal interview with the manager.

PRESENTATIONS

Each team will be asked to provide a presentation to a panel of 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 any contest-provided computers to the contest management at the end of the day. **This is done to encourage contestants to network with sponsors and other contestants that night instead of working on their presentations.**

The contest management will make photocopies of the presentations for the judges' panels and load the presentations on computer projectors in presentation order for the next day. On presentation day, 15 minutes prior to their presentation time, contest teams are to report to a holding room prepared for their presentation. All preparations for the team's presentation should be complete prior to signing into the holding room. The teams will then be escorted from the holding room to their presentation room.

Each team will be assigned to morning or afternoon presentation sessions. Presentation order of the teams will be by random draw and is in the same order as the private interview sessions. Each team will follow in order at approximately one-hour 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 presentations. Every team must use farm names provided.

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 four of the team members must speak during some part of the presentation and during the question session. **Teams may briefly confer on a question or may choose not to confer during questions, as each team member should have a specialty area in questioning that they can be responsible for.**

Every team will have access to PowerPoint, a laser pointer, and a computer projector system to aid with their presentation. All coach(es) will be allowed to view their own team's presentation, in a designated area in the room. A part of the room will also be open to sponsors for viewing the presentations. No spectators will be allowed to enter or leave 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.

After all presentations are complete, a final ranking will be given to each team. A summary of the judges' evaluation for each farm visit will also be provided. Teams will receive these materials at the awards banquet.

Recording of the presentations will allow further educational opportunities for the coaches. Coaches are encouraged to record their own university's presentation for their use.

Formal Complaint System

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.

BIO-SECURITY

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.

STUDENT NETWORKING WITH STUDENTS AND SPONSORS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Each contestant will be asked to fill out a pre-contest questionnaire providing biographical data and career goals or interests to allow ample networking opportunities. Each contestant will have the opportunity to network with fellow contestants and company representatives of the various sponsors. Sponsors will also be allowed to set up booths, and students are encouraged to visit these displays. Several meal functions will also be provided to enhance networking opportunities. The contestant biographies 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

Travel support: A pool of sponsor funds has been allocated to support National Contest travel costs for schools in need. The stipend amount will depend on the number of applications approved. To be considered, schools must meet the following qualifications: Have a team competing in the national contest *and* be traveling (driving or flying) at least 800 miles. Deadline to submit this form: February 1. To help schools with their planning, recipients will be notified prior to the registration entry deadline. Teams accepted to compete will receive contest confirmations and exact travel stipend amounts in mid-February (These travel amounts will be no less than what was indicated earlier but could be more). Approximately three weeks after the contest, travel stipend checks will be issued by contest management, upon receipt of surveys or other necessary forms from schools, teams or individuals.

Contest participants will receive complimentary rooms for up to three nights (reservations are to be made by the university) and complimentary tickets to each meal function. Please inform contest management if you will not be using all of your allocation.

Teams will be ranked in each host farm division, and the 1st and 2nd Place teams for each farm will receive Dairy Challenge Scholarships.

Team contest photos will be taken of each participating team. The contest results will be available to all sponsors and media and will be 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 our Diamond, Emerald and other Dairy sponsors for their generous support of this great event. A sponsor contact list will be provided at the contest to aid in your response.