21st Annual Southern Regional Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge
Sunday January 24 – Tuesday January 26, 2027 ***(note date change for 2027!)***
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Hosted by Eastern Kentucky University

To register your team, go to:
https://2027SouthernNAIDC.eventbrite.com

Registration Deadline: Thursday December 3, 2026

November 3, 2026

Dear Southern Dairy Challenge Coaches:

On behalf of the Southern Regional Committee of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, it is our pleasure to invite your school to participate in the 21st Annual Southern Regional Dairy Challenge. This year's event will be held at The Crowne Plaza in Bowling Green, Kentucky January 24-26 and hosted by Eastern Kentucky University. The program will run Sunday evening through Tuesday afternoon to minimize days away from campus.

This letter contains important information about participation in the Southern Regional Dairy Challenge. Please review it carefully.

Participation
Requirements for student participation include:

1. Being actively enrolled in an agricultural curriculum which includes classes related to dairy production.
2. Having satisfactorily completed at least one year of college.
3. Having a genuine interest in a possible career associated in the dairy industry.
4. Students are eligible to participate in 2 regionals, 2 academies, 1 national 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.*

Teams will be mixed/aggregate, consisting of students from different schools.

Schools may register up to 5 students. If you have additional students interested in participating, you may register them as alternates. This year's contest will accommodate up to 72 student participants with the option to expand to 84 if needed. Alternates will be added should we have fewer than 72 students. Please review Southern Contest Rules, Eligibility of Contestants on the contest web site as you select participating students.

Registration

Registration is online via Eventbrite. Registration fees should be paid using a credit card at the time of registration or select "pay with a check". **Team registration closes Thursday December 3, 2026.**

- Online Registration: **https://2027SouthernNAIDC.eventbrite.com**
- Be prepared with your students' email addresses when you begin registration. Upon completion of the team registration, the system will send you a confirmation.
- **Entry Fee: $50 per student** which includes all meals and 2 nights (Sun- Mon) lodging
    - If paying with a check, make checks payable to: North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge or NAIDC, 3310 Latham Drive, Madison, WI 53713. Note, schools paying with a check must send payment by the December 3 deadline to secure your registration.
- Completed entries will receive priority by registration date/time if contest size limits are reached before the deadline.
- After your registration is confirmed, students will be instructed to complete a Student Information Form and upload a resume. The form and resume upload will be available on the Southern Dairy Challenge page on the NAIDC web site https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/ and will be due December 18, 2026.
- Due to deadlines imposed by the facility for rooming lists and to ensure the contest flows smoothly, no changes may be made to students participating after December 18, 2026. Please note this date and plan accordingly.

Housing

Room reservations will be made by Dairy Challenge upon receipt of the entry form. All participants will be staying at **Crowne Plaza Bowling Green** *(rebranded from Holiday Inn University Plaza) at* 1021 Wilkinson Trace in Bowling Green, KY 42103, PH: 270-745-0088.

Rooms will be provided at no extra charge for each participating team:

1 room(s) for female participants
1 room(s) for male participants
1 room(s) for coach(es)

- Sleeping rooms will be assigned by school and may be shared with students from other schools as needed. Coaches will likely be paired with a coach (2 to a room).
    - *In situations where extra rooms are required by universities (e.g. due to university rooming policies, accommodation of individual needs, etc.), coaches must notify NAIDC, and the individual university will be responsible for covering the cost of these additional rooms.*
- Room reservations will be for the nights of Sunday, January 24 and Monday, January 25. Note our event will end no later than 4:30 PM EST depending on number of teams.
- Room check-in begins at 3 PM on Sunday and contest registration will be from 5:00-5:30 PM at the hotel.

Travel

Airport Information for Bowling Green, KY

- Nashville International Airport (BNA) – 70 miles. The hotel does not provide shuttle service.

Meals

Meals will be provided for one coach and officially registered team members:

January 24 (Sunday): Dinner
January 25 (Monday): Breakfast, lunch, and dinner
January 26 (Tuesday): Breakfast and lunch

Additional meals can be paid for when registering. Should you have any dietary needs, please include this information with the contest registration form. You do not need to collect this information for your students; students will be asked this on their Student Information Form.

Contest Schedule

You can view the latest contest schedule on the Southern tab of Dairy Challenge website at https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/

Coach's Webinar

We will be hosting a webinar for coaches attending the Southern Regional contest on Tuesday November 17 at 3 PM Eastern, 2 PM Central to help you prepare for your participation in the contest. Meeting access information is below.

Southern Dairy Challenge Coaches Webinar
Tuesday November 17 at 3:00 PM EDT, 2:00 PM CDT

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8608448448?pwd=5n2vLNajov8wX3OY2RKIRuBMmhPaGN.1&omn=87892763564

Meeting ID: 860 844 8448 | Passcode: 980248

Coach Training Resources

Several resources are available to coaches as you prepare students for the contest.

- Resources for student preparation: https://www.dairychallenge.org/student-resources/
- Coaches Resources site: The secure Coaches Resources site (accessible from the student resources page link above) includes past contest materials. Each past contest link contains a contact information folder that includes contact information for industry volunteers who are willing to help with training. This folder also includes contact information for other Southern Regional coaches. We encourage coaches to talk with neighboring schools to do joint training**. The password for this site is Co@che$_Rock!**
- Dairy software training is available to schools. Contact Craig Walter craig.walter@vas.com for Dairy Comp or Greg Palas gepalas@iastate.edu for Dart.
- New coaches: Southern coaches and industry reps are also available to help you prepare your students. Please contact Molly or Jenna if you'd like to be connected with individuals willing to help.

Additional Details

- An optional pre-challenge tour with learning stations will be offered at WKU SmartHolstein Lab in Bowling Green on Sunday afternoon 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Eastern Time. Schools interested in participating may wish to travel directly to the site, then check into rooms at Crowne Plaza after the tour. Tour details will be included in future communications.

- We will be using one farm with 2 panels of judges.

- Participants should plan to use their own computers for the contest. In addition, each school should plan to bring at least 2 computers for use in presentation and prep rooms, etc. Note**, Mac's do not work with the dairy software, so schools may need to make arrangements for students who have Macs.**
    - Please review computer requirements on the Southern Contest page.

- Dairy software (DART and Dairy Comp) is be available for download from the Southern website. Students should download the software to their computers BEFORE coming to the contest.
    - Support is available if needed.

- All contest materials will be posted to a secure website only accessible to registered participants. Students will have early access to some contest data the week of the contest; the remaining data will be released once onsite Sunday evening.
    - Coaches, please ensure all contest data is removed from your students' computers after the contest ends.

- Students will be responsible for completing an individual informational form online. The Student Information form includes Contestant Liability Waiver, Contest Information Release Waiver, and the Contestant Honor Code.
    - Students will have from December 8 to December 18 to complete this information.
    - This form will be added to the Southern tab of Dairy Challenge website at https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/ and sent to registered students.
    - Students should also prepare a resume for upload by December 18. The upload link will be available on the Southern tab of Dairy Challenge web site at https://www.dairychallenge.org/contests/southern/ Resumes will be distributed to sponsors for the Southern Region for recruiting purposes. Students should bring copies to distribute to sponsors on Tuesday.

- **Student information forms must be submitted, and resumes must be uploaded by the December 18 deadline. Students who miss the deadline without prior permission risk being canceled from the event.**

Social Media Corps

In addition to contest participants, Dairy Challenge is looking for students who would be interested in serving on the Southern Social Media Corps team. Please visit with students in your club and ag communications department about this unique hands-on opportunity to work with communications professionals to promote the event. An application is posted to the Southern page. Social Media Corps applications are due December 4, 2026.

Dairy Challenge Shirt

Show your support for Dairy Challenge by purchasing a shirt. Coaches can order and pay using the registration form. Students can order and pay using their Student Information Forms. Orders will be shipped to the event and can be picked up during registration.

Communications will follow once registration closes in December with additional information, and in mid-January with last-minute details. If you have any questions in the meantime, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to your participation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Elliott & Liz Eckelkamp
Southern Regional Dairy Challenge
Steering Committee Co-Chairs