

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Anna Troester, Midwest Dairy Challenge Publicity Chair, 563-880-4797 or annartroester@gmail.com

Josh Hushon, Midwest Dairy Challenge Committee Member, 920-342-0611 or josh_hushon@cargill.com

Theodore J. Halbach, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Contest Host, 608-263-3305 or tjhalbach@wisc.edu

University of Wisconsin-Madison Dairy Science to Host Midwest Dairy Challenge®

Madison, Wisconsin February 2, 2018 – University of Wisconsin-Madison will host college dairy students at the Midwest Dairy Challenge, February 7-9, 2018, in Madison, Wisconsin. Dairy Challenge® is a prominent educational event for students planning a career in the dairy industry. One hundred and twenty students from a combined 20 four-year colleges and technical schools are expected at the 14th annual Midwest Dairy Challenge.

The Midwest event is one of four regional contests sponsored each year by North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC). These regional contests – plus a national event for about 300 dairy collegiates – are funded through generous support by 130 agribusinesses and dairy producers. Over its 16-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 5,000 students for careers as dairy owners or managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals.

“The Madison area is blessed with the necessary resources it takes to grow the Midwest contest,” states Ted Halbach, UW-Madison faculty associate in dairy management. “No other university has the number of progressive dairy operations located within a 30-mile radius of campus that we do, and there is a concentration of industry professionals who deliver them their services. Hopefully, a good number of these folks now working in the industry will step forward as volunteers ‘to give back’ to a program that benefitted them as undergrads.”

At Dairy Challenge, each team of students put textbook knowledge to the ultimate test – providing solutions for a dairy. Student participants will be assigned to teams, working with students from other colleges whom they are meeting for the first time. These teams inspect an operating dairy, analyze farm data and interview farm owners. Then they develop recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health and housing to help the farm optimize performance and profitability.

Teams will present their recommendations to farm owners – while being evaluated by a panel of five judges including dairy producers, veterinarians, farm finance specialists and industry personnel. In addition to this consulting competition, students have ample opportunity for networking and education.

The Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge invites all dairy producers to join us on Thursday, February 8, 2018 when State Assembly Representative Gary Tauchen will speak on the future of the dairy industry, the 2018 Farm Bill and address questions on other topics from the audience. The program will begin with a cocktail reception at 6:30 PM. At 7:00 PM you will be joined for dinner by the participating students. During the dinner, a past Alice In Dairyland will provide interactive professional development training. You will also learn about Dairy Challenge and our work with industry, universities and producers to generate students who are more experienced and knowledgeable, and will be better prepared to serve the dairy industry of the future. Representative Tauchen's talk will follow dinner. Your \$50 ticket entitles you to dinner for (2), interaction with students, professional development, learn about Dairy Challenge, and get a dairy industry update from Representative Tauchen. Seating is limited, so please go to <https://future-of-dairy-industry.eventbrite.com> to reserve your spot today.

Media, sponsors and dairy enthusiasts are invited to the following Midwest Dairy Challenge events at the Madison Concourse Hotel. Please make advance arrangements by contacting Anna Troester, Midwest Dairy Challenge Publicity Chair at 563-880-4797 or Josh Hushon at 920-342-0611.

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| Educational Seminars | Wed., Feb. 7 | 3:00-5:00 p.m. | Senate, University and Madison Rooms |
| Teambuilding Activity | Wed., Feb. 7 | 6:15-6:45 p.m. | Wisconsin Ballroom |
| Student farm visits | Thurs., Feb. 8 | 8:00-11:00 a.m. | Two area dairy farms |

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| Student presentations | Fri., Feb. 9 | 7:00-10:45 a.m. | Conference Room |
| Student presentations | Fri., Feb. 9 | 11:30 a.m.-1:45 p.m. | Conference Room |
| Dairy Innovation Tour | Fri., Feb. 9 | 7:45 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. | Statz Dairy |
| Industry Innovation Fair | Fri., Feb. 9 | 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. | Madison/Wisconsin Foyer |

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About Dairy Challenge

NAIDC is an innovative two-day competition for students representing dairy science programs at North American universities. Its mission is to facilitate education, communication and an exchange of ideas among students, agribusiness, dairy producers and universities that enhances the development of the dairy industry and its leaders.

The 2018 national event will be April 12-14 in Visalia, CA; details are at www.dairychallenge.org .

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