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Midwest Dairy Challenge Moves to Wisconsin in 2007

The third annual Midwest Dairy Challenge will be held in the heart of America's Dairyland from January 25 to 27, 2007. The contest will be hosted by Fond du Lac County University of Wisconsin-Extension and Moraine Park Technical College, and headquartered at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, Fond du Lac, Wis.

"Wisconsin and Fond du Lac County are extremely pleased to have the opportunity to host the students participating in this year's Midwest Dairy Challenge," said Paul Dyk, Fond du Lac County UW-Extension dairy and livestock agent. "This will be a great learning opportunity for all involved to analyze the business and management practices of progressive dairy farm operations."

The two and a half-day day event is packed with educational programs for students, as well as opportunities to network with industry professionals – with many looking for potential interns and full-time employees. Working in four- or five-person, mixed-university teams, students will get to assess all aspects of a working dairy farm and present their recommendations for improvement to a panel of judges and the participating farm families.

"Holding our third regional contest in the Midwest will continue allowing us to expose more and more students to the Dairy Challenge concept," explained Kylie Daniels, manager of Field Research for ADM Alliance Nutrition Inc., in Decatur, Ind. Daniels, the Midwest NAIDC chairperson, continued, "Students are introduced to the competition in an educational setting that still holds the basic competitive nature of the national contest. Furthermore, they are placed on mixed teams and create friendships, which will prove to be valuable contacts in the future."

Students participate in team-building activities the first evening, as well as listen to presentations from several industry consultants on how they go about their daily work. Armed with information about nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management, teams head out to the farms on day two to get a firsthand look at how the dairy they are evaluating runs its business. Later that afternoon, students interview the dairy's owners and managers to get any final

questions they have about the farm answered before forming their recommendations. That day concludes with an informal dinner with sponsors and planning committee members where students have the opportunity to interact with industry professionals. Day three gets rolling early with team presentations, which are followed by judges' questions and their critique. A short award ceremony wraps up the event.

To compete in the contest, an entry form must be completed and postmarked by Nov. 15, 2006, to American Dairy Science Association, 1111 North Dunlap Avenue, Savoy, IL 61874. An entry fee of \$50 must accompany each entry.

Nearly 70 participants from 10 different schools competed at the second annual contest, held last January in Brookings, S.D. Schools represented included Iowa State University, North Dakota State University, Northeast Iowa Community College, Purdue University, Ridgewater College, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and the host school, South Dakota State University. Contest organizers were pleased to see three new teams at last year's contest and are actively recruiting even more participants for the 2007 event.

Monetary and in-kind sponsorships are welcome. Defined monetary levels are \$500 for Bronze, \$1,000 for Silver, \$2,500 for Gold, and \$5,000 or more for Platinum. If a company wishes to provide Platinum in-kind sponsorship, it must contribute at least one-half of the sponsorship in cash or reduce NAIDC expenses by \$5,000 or more. In-kind contributions for Bronze, Silver and Gold sponsorships do not require cash as a portion of the sponsorship, but must be valued at the designated levels. To become a sponsor, contact Kylene Anderson of ABS Global at 608-846-1443 or kanderson@absglobal.com. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge was established as a management contest to incorporate all phases of a specific dairy business. It strives to incorporate a higher-learning atmosphere with practical application to help prepare students for careers in the dairy industry. Supported financially through generous donations by industry and coordinated by a volunteer board of directors, the first NAIDC was held in April 2002.