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University of Illinois Team Earns Gold Award at North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge

Syracuse, NY, March 30, 2009—A team of four students from University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, won a Gold Award in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) held March 27 and 28 in Syracuse, N.Y.

A total of 29 teams from the United States and two from Canada competed in the eighth annual event, hosted by the Northeast Region NAIDC committee.

The team coached by Travis Michels consisted of Katie Boesche, DeKalb, Ill.; Clint Harre, Nashville, Ill.; Erin Lyons, Rockford, Ill.; and Kelly Sheehan, Huntley, Ill.

Dairy Challenge was designed by professionals from the allied dairy industry and university educators to bring classroom training to life in the real world for students preparing for dairy careers.

The Illini team spent two days at the contest. On the first day, they combed through cow and farm management data, as well as financial records, then conducted an on-site evaluation. Later that day, they also interviewed the farm owner.

After identify opportunities to increase efficiency and profitability for the herd owner, the team presented its findings to a judging panel comprised of a dairy business owner and four experts in dairy nutrition, herd health, reproduction, and financial management. Teams were judged on their analysis of the operation, recommendations, and overall presentation.

Reflecting on this year's competition, reproduction expert and judge Dr. Ray Nebel from Select Sires Inc. said, "Besides being the best training of students for what they will face in the future, the Dairy Challenge contest brings together the whole dairy industry for a great common goal. The knowledge, excitement, enthusiasm, and teamwork displayed by the students at the 2009 Dairy Challenge made me feel good about the future of the dairy industry and the outstanding leaders it will have."

About Dairy Challenge

The mission of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge 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 2010 national contest will be held April 8 through 10 in Visalia, Calif., with four regional contests scheduled for late fall 2009 and winter 2010. For more information or to become a sponsor of the Dairy Challenge program, visit www.dairychallenge.org or contact Molly J. Kelley, Executive Director, at naidc@wdexpo.com.

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Note to Editors: Team photo with cutline available for download at www.usjersey.com/images/09NAIDC/index.htm, or contact Lisa Behnke, WDE Management Inc., 3310 Latham Drive, Madison, WI 53713, phone: 608-224-0400, ext. 108, fax: 608-224-0300, or e-mail: lbehnke@wdexpo.com.