

2016 MSU Dairy Challenge

The 18th annual MSU Dairy Challenge was held on November 30 and December 7, 2016 for MSU students with an interest in dairy. The competition provides students with the opportunity to evaluate dairy farm management in a fun and educational setting. Participants in the MSU Dairy Challenge have the opportunity to be invited to attend the Midwest Regional Dairy Challenge, the Dairy Challenge Academy and the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge.

Ninety undergraduate, Ag Tech and veterinary students participated in the event held at Spitzley Dairy Farm, owned by Chris and Ryan Spitzley of Portland. The advanced division consisted of seven teams, the novice division had eight teams, and the Ag Tech division included five teams. Students in the advanced division must have completed the advanced dairy management course. Each team in the novice division was mentored throughout the process by a recent alumnus of MSU and the Dairy Challenge program.

Day one of the two-day competition began with each team visiting the Spitzley Dairy Farm near Portland, host for this year's event. Before visiting the dairy, each team reviewed a packet of information including production and farm management data. After a visit to the dairy and an interview with farm personnel, team members worked together to develop a comprehensive program that includes recommendations for herd management. Students were tasked with identifying and prioritizing potential areas of improvement.

On day two, teams presented their recommendations to a panel of judges. Students fielded questions from each of the judges following their presentation. Equally important in the learning process was the oral feedback provided by the panel of judges to each team. The evening concluded with a dinner and recognition program.

The winning team in the novice division included Leta Larsen (freshman in Agribusiness Management from Scottville), Madeline Meyer (freshman in Animal Science from Ionia), Allison Schafer (freshman in Agribusiness Management from Westphalia) and Riley Smith (junior in Animal Science from St. Johns). The second-place team included Brandon Goering (sophomore in Animal Science from Archibold, OH), Ellen Launstein (junior in Animal Science from Mason), Jared Sanderson (sophomore in Animal Science from Sandusky), and Eric Vigansky (junior in Animal Science from Stevensville).

The winning team in the advanced division included Nicole Chase (junior in Agribusiness Management from Conklin), Michael Herman (senior in Animal Science from Sebewaing), Emily Peacock (senior in Animal Science from Morley) and Marin Western (senior in Animal Science from Kingston). The second-place

team included Suzanna Hull (junior in Animal Science from North Adams), Michael Pell (senior in Agribusiness Management from Fremont), Allison Pung (senior in Agribusiness Management from Portland), and Rebecca Swartzendruber (senior in Agribusiness Management from Bay Port).

The winning teams (tie) in the Ag Tech division of students in the 2-year Dairy Management program included Rachel Ekkel (Fremont), Erin Fritz (West Branch), Travis Jerue (Muskegon) and Craig Southerton (Alto), and the team of Ashley Hillman (Galesburg), Dejanne Hospers (The Netherlands) and Krysti Jolley (Edmore). The third place team included Shelby Berens (Holland), Zolee Kujawa (Wolverine Lake), Evelyn Okkema (Blanchard) and Kelly Raterink (Zeeland).

Financial support for the MSU Dairy Challenge program is graciously provided by ADM Alliance Nutrition, AIS Equipment, Caledonia Farmers Elevator, Cargill Feed & Nutrition, Dairy Farmers of America, Diamond V, the Frederick P. Halbert Dairy Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund Merck Animal Health, the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Fund, Michigan Milk Producers Association, Nobis Agri Service, Northstar Cooperative and Antel Bio, PhiBro, the Roger and Marjorie Mellenberger Dairy Associates Program Enhancement Fund, and Vita Plus Corporation. Thank you to the Spitzley Dairy Farm and Joe Tarkowski and Garrett Slavik, Cargill Feed & Nutrition, for working with the Spitzleys to host the MSU Dairy Challenge.

Judges for the MSU Dairy Challenge contribute hours of time and effort: Dr. Herb Bucholtz, MSU Animal Science; Faith Cullens, MSU Extension Dairy Educator; Dr. Tony Ellis, Countyline Veterinary Clinic; Dr. Ron Erskine, MSU College of Veterinary Medicine; Don Martell, Diamond V; Doug Moyer, NorthStar Cooperative Inc.; Brad Oldick, Purina Animal Nutrition; Jenna Taylor, Countyline Veterinary Service; and Rob West, MSU Farms. Special thanks go to the mentors for the novice teams: Lauren Bush, Purina Animal Nutrition; Mark Case, Vita Plus Corporation; Josh Garver, JBS United; Casey Lauer, Genex; Nathanael Miller, herdsman; Samantha Mamarow, dairy producer; Garrett Slavik, Cargill Feed & Nutrition; Johnny Thompson, Greenstone Farm Credit; and Brian Troyer, Caledonia Farmers Elevator.

The support from all of the Dairy Challenge sponsors makes the MSU, regional, and national Dairy Challenge events possible. Additional information on the regional and national Dairy Challenge events and a listing of corporate sponsors is available at www.dairychallenge.org.

Photo attached of Chris Spitzley following presentation of framed cow print at Spitzley Dairy Farm