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Cal Poly Students Win First Place in North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge

SAN LUIS OBISPO — A team of four Cal Poly students took first place at the 14th annual North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge held April 9-11 in Liverpool, N.Y.

The Dairy Challenge is a two-day competition for students representing dairy science programs at North American universities. Students were asked to evaluate an operational New York dairy and develop a farm analysis that included a list of recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management.

The Cal Poly team ranked first among eight competing teams that evaluated the same dairy. Cal Poly's team included: Anthony Alamo of Turlock; Preston Fernandes of Tulare; Amy McBirney of Morgan Hill; and Russell Pate of Visalia. Dairy science Professor Stan Henderson coached the team.

"The challenge was a culmination of all the hard work that we have put into school for the last four years," said senior Pate. "We took what we have learned and applied it to a real-world situation at a competitive level."

The Cal Poly team advanced to the national competition after a successful performance at the Western Regional Dairy Challenge held in Tulare, Calif., in February.

"Cal Poly's success in the Dairy Challenge can be attributed to the knowledge and talent of our students," said Henderson. "Cal Poly students have won this competition for the past three years, more often than any other university in North America."

In all, 274 students from 38 colleges across the U.S. and Canada attended competed in the national event. These students are training for careers in the dairy industry as farmers, researchers, educators, financial analysts, nutritionists, farm service providers and veterinarians.

Collegiate participants visited six dairy farms in New York as part of their training to help farmers evaluate and adapt management practices to optimize success and animal care. Industry professionals presented cutting-edge research, new programs and career opportunities to students.

The event concluded with team members presenting recommendations and fielding questions from a panel of judges composed of dairy producers and industry experts in dairy finances, reproduction, nutrition and animal health. Presentations were evaluated for accuracy of analysis and recommendations, with awards presented at a final banquet.

About the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge was established as a

management contest to incorporate all phases of a specific dairy business. Its mission is to develop tomorrow's dairy leaders and enhance progress of the dairy industry by providing education, communication and networking among students, producers, and agribusiness and university personnel. NAIDC is supported through donations from 120 agribusinesses and dairy producers, and programs are coordinated by a volunteer board of directors. For more information, visit www.dairychallenge.org or www.facebook.com/DairyChallenge.

About Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences
Cal Poly is a nationally ranked, comprehensive polytechnic university. The university's College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences comprises expert faculty members who take pride in their ability to transform academically motivated students into innovative individuals ready to solve the complex challenges associated with feeding the world in sustainable ways. Students have access to state-of-the-art laboratories, including ranchland, orchards, vineyards and forests, which provide the basis for Cal Poly's Learn by Doing methodology.

Photo Caption info

A team of Cal Poly students won the 14th annual North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, held April 9-11, in New York state. From left, Cal Poly students Preston Fernandes, Russell Pate, Amy McBirney and Anthony Alamo, with coach Stan Henderson.

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