

Dairy Challenge®: Elects new leadership

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Madison, WI, July 27, 2023 – North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge® (NAIDC) recently elected new leadership, including three new board members and Executive Committee. As described in the NAIDC mission statement, the board focus is to “Develop tomorrow’s dairy leaders and enhance the progress of the dairy industry, by providing education, communication and networking among students, producers, and agribusiness and university personnel.”

In the 21-year history of Dairy Challenge, members of the Board of Directors have provided leadership as the program has expanded significantly and evolved to meet ever-changing dairy dynamics. Dairy Challenge began in 2002 with 56 students from 13 colleges in one national event. Now, more than 500 dairy students have opportunities to participate each year through the national competition, the Dairy Challenge Academy and four regional events. Representing the countless volunteers and supporters of these events, the Board of Directors includes a mix of university professionals, dairy producers and industry sponsors.

Newly elected to the 15-person volunteer NAIDC Board of Directors include:

- **Matt Groen, Cargill, Guelph, Ontario, Canada** – Matt Groen works in Dairy Technical Services as a Nutritionist for Cargill in Canada. Matt has a history of involvement with the NAIDC. Matt competed for the University of Guelph at the national Dairy Challenge competition in 2011 in North Carolina. Since 2012, Matt has been involved in helping with coordination of the University of Guelph’s Dairy Challenge Course and has also since then helped coach the University of Guelph Dairy Challenge team alongside the late Dr. John Walton and presently with Dr. Trevor DeVries
- **Marilyn Schaap, Deer Creek Feeding, LLC. Farwell, TX.** – Marilyn was

born and raised on her family's dairy farm in Tipton, CA. She attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo where she participated in Dairy Challenge at the regional level and was a member of Cal Poly's national team. Marilyn works as a controller for Deer Creek Feeding, LLC and lives with her husband in Texas.

- **Erin Spangler, Riverview, LLP, Morris, MN.** – Erin Spangler was raised on a dairy farm in Northeast Iowa where she developed a passion for the industry and the people involved. Erin has worked with Riverview for the last eleven years with a focus on employee safety on dairy farms, recruitment of employees and IT systems. Based out of the Morris, Minnesota location, she is responsible for the coordination of safety audits, safety compliance as well as development and implementation of recruitment programs at all farms in five states. Erin is married to Conrad, a former dairy challenge participant, who also grew up on an Iowa dairy farms and works with Riverview.

The NAIDC Executive Committee for 2023-24 includes:

- Chair: Cathy Myers, DVM, Amelcor, Fresno, CA.
- Vice Chair: Alex White, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Associate Vice Chair: Jeffrey Elliot, Balchem, Amarillo, TX.
- Finance Chair: Dave Thorbahn, Select Sires, Plain City, OH.
- Programs and Engagement Chair: Gail Carpenter, Iowa State University, Ames, IA.
- Program Chair: Ted Halbach, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

About Dairy Challenge

NAIDC is an innovative event for students in dairy programs at North American post-secondary institutions. 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. Over its 21-year national history, Dairy Challenge has helped prepare more than 9,000 students for careers as farm owners and managers, consultants, researchers, veterinarians or other dairy professionals. In addition to the national competition and Dairy Challenge Academy held in March/April, four regional contests are held in late fall and winter; details are at www.dairychallenge.org.