

# 2026 NACTA JUDGING CONFERENCE ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY



**NACTA**

NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGES  
AND TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE

# ILLINOIS STATE

## *Agriculture*

Dairy Contest Official Rules

Contest Chair:

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# ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## 2026 NACTA JUDGING CONFERENCE - DAIRY CONTEST

### DAIRY JUDGING CONTEST OFFICIAL RULES

Contest Director: David Malone - [dmalone@ilstu.edu](mailto:dmalone@ilstu.edu)

#### Description

1. The contest will consist of a minimum of six placing classes of cows and heifers.
2. If possible, additional classes may be added for a maximum total of eight placing classes. (It will be a goal to have several breeds represented)
3. Contestants will be required to defend their placings with four sets of oral reasons. Oral reasons may be given for any of the classes.
4. Teams will consist of four members who will judge and give reasons. The three high individual scores will be totaled to determine team scores. All four contestants will be eligible for individual awards.
5. Unlimited individuals may participate beyond the members of the team, but team members must be declared at on-site registration.
6. If extra individuals participate as official contestants, they should keep in mind that they may compete for awards twice as a junior college contestant and twice as a senior college contestant in the NACTA Dairy Judging contest. Extra individuals must pay full registration fees.

#### Eligibility

1. All contestants must be currently enrolled in a two-year or a four-year institution and pursuing an undergraduate degree. An individual may compete in the NACTA Dairy Judging contest as an official two-year college contestant two times and as an official four-year college contestant two times. If they previously competed in the two-year college division, they may compete once in the four-year college division.
2. Teams will consist of four members from the same institution in the same division. Unlimited additional contestants beyond the four-person team may participate from each school and are eligible for individual awards. If registering as an individual, contestants will be eligible for individual competition only and will not be included in a team score. Teams must consist of four designated members (noted during the event check-in) to be eligible for the team award.

#### Contest Rules

1. There will be a two-year college division and a four-year college division. Both divisions will evaluate the same placing classes. Awards will be given separately by division.
2. No member of any team or their coach shall be allowed in the cattle barns nor have the privilege of inspecting any cattle at the NACTA contest prior to the contest.
3. Contestants will be issued official placing cards necessary for scoring purposes. The only materials contestants may take into the ring are pens/pencils, and a clean notepad/clipboard with blank sheets of paper.

4. Twelve (12) minutes will be allowed for placing classes where no reasons are required. Fifteen (15) minutes will be allowed for placing and taking notes for oral reasons classes.
5. Reasons classes will be designated prior to the start of the contest.
6. Oral reasons should not exceed two minutes in length. Contestants will not be allowed to use notes during oral reasons.
7. Contestants cannot wear any items such as hats, belt buckles, or anything that personally identifies an individual or members of the team.
8. Contestants shall not at any time place their hands on any animal.
9. Cattle will be shown loose or led around a ring and presented to contestants depending on availability.
10. All placings, cuts and reasons scores provided by the official judges will be final.
11. Typical contest scoring and tie breaking methods will be in use.
12. Final class details will be made available at the coaches meeting.
13. No communication with contestants or anyone else except superintendents or group leaders will be permitted once the contest has started. Coaches may not communicate with a team or individuals until the contest is finished. No cell phones, electronic devices, or watches; no text messaging, or conferring during the contest will be allowed. Contestants observed in violation of this may be disqualified from the competition
14. The Superintendent's announcement of all individual and team placings will be final.