



Dairy Management Inc. New Product Competition now accepting entries for 2027

Dairy Management Inc. (DMI) New Product Competition (formerly also known as the National Dairy Council New Product Competition) seeks the next innovative product.

Undergraduate and graduate students in the United States are eligible to compete by developing **Innovative, Dairy-Based Products for consumers seeking “sustained energy”**. Successful entries will meet competition criteria, demonstrate innovation and provide value to consumers.

This competition is an opportunity for students to develop new products in line with current industry and consumer insights to uncover innovative dairy-based products for health and wellness:

- Consumers have fundamentally redefined “energy”. It is no longer about a quick caffeine hit but about consistent, steady energy for sustained performance across the day.
- Consumers seeking energy now look to:
 - Maintain steady energy throughout the day
 - Reduce fatigue and feel more energized
 - Improve energy or stamina
 - Feel less tired or sluggish
 - Increase energy and reduce tiredness
 - Improve sleep quality

Together, that spells OPPORTUNITY for dairy. For more insights, please see “2027 Challenge: Consumer and Marketplace Insights” at <https://www.usdairy.com/research-resources/new-product-competition>.

The judging panel includes experts from across the dairy industry. Winning teams will be recognized at the American Dairy Science Association Annual Meeting in Raleigh, NC, from June 27-30, 2027.

A combined \$27,000 in cash prizes will be awarded:

- **Platinum Dairy Innovator Award** of \$10,000 for first place
- **Gold Dairy Innovator Award** of \$7,000 for second place
- **Silver Dairy Innovator Award** of \$4,000 for third place
- **Dairy Innovator Award** of \$2,000 each for the remaining 3 finalists that make it to the top six and successfully complete Phase 2 of the competition

See full contest details at <https://www.usdairy.com/research-resources/new-product-competition>.

The deadline for 2027 contest submissions is Feb. 1, 2027.

If you have any questions, please contact Rohit Kapoor at rohit.kapoor@dairy.org.

DMI New Product Competition provides a platform for students to bring their knowledge and expertise to dairy product innovation. Tomorrow’s product developers can showcase novel ways to use dairy in products that help meet consumer needs. Students also have the opportunity to integrate their work on product formulation with packaging, pricing, and marketing to create a product that would meet consumer needs in the marketplace.



Competition Details

Develop **Innovative, Dairy-Based Products for consumers seeking “sustained energy”**.

The new product must follow the guidelines below:

- Must contain greater than 51% dairy ingredients by weight of the finished product
- Use any form of fresh or dry milk, whey, milk fat, milk proteins, cheese, lactose fractions or other dairy ingredients
- Must provide at least a **good** source of dairy protein (the product should contain 10% or more of the Daily Value (please follow [this](#) link) per reference amount (please follow [this](#) link)).
- Meet food labeling and regulatory criteria as specified by the Code of Federal Regulations [here](#)
- Be fit for human consumption

* Failure to meet the above guidelines would lead to disqualification of your submission.

Eligibility Guidelines

DMI Product Development Competition is open to all undergraduate and graduate students within the U.S. and enrolled during the 2026-2027 year (including students graduating in May or August 2027).

Students must follow these guidelines:

- All submissions must be the work of students under the supervision of a faculty adviser who ensures the rules are being followed.
- Team entries (minimum of two individuals) will be accepted, with no limit on the number of entries per school.
- There is no limit to the number of team members, but all team members must attend the same college or university.
- Entries may stem from a previous research project, course or product development team project, but products must not:
 - Be entered into more than one product development contest with the same entry within the same academic year ¹
 - Be commercially marketed
- First-, second- and third-place products from previous Dairy Research Institute/ National Dairy Council®/DMI competitions may not be entered in future National Dairy Council®/DMI product development competitions, unless the entry has been changed and improved upon.

¹ An exception to this rule: Teams are allowed to enter their submission in their local/state dairy products programs such as CMAB accelerator, NY Milk Launch, etc.

Entry Guidelines

There are three phases to the competition.

Phase One: Preliminary Report and Cover Letter

A cover letter and preliminary report must be submitted to Dairy Management Inc. (addressed to Rohit Kapoor at rohit.kapoor@dairy.org) by no later than **Feb. 1, 2027**.

The **cover letter** must include school affiliation, student names, adviser names and ingredient supplier names. The cover letter must also include the **email, contact phone number, and department mailing address** of the team captain or the designated team contact. In addition to the above attachments, please also **include the T-shirt sizes of all team members and advisers in the body of the email**.

The **five-page preliminary report** must follow these guidelines:

- The report must **NOT** indicate school affiliation, student or adviser names, or ingredient supplier names (unless an integral part of the ingredient name)
- The report must not exceed five pages, double-spaced, minimum font size of 11 points.
- Should include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Title page (**not included in page limit**)
 - Product description (in this section, in addition to the product description and other relevant details, please also ensure that you clearly highlight that your product meets the guidelines as set forth in the “competition details” section on page 2 of this document)
 - Feasibility of production and/or process description
 - Marketability/target market
 - Preliminary sensory data
 - Dairy ingredient functionality in product
 - Demonstrate how the product is linked to [DMI consumer and marketplace insights](#)
 - List of citations (**not included in page limit**)
 - Product formula (**not included in page limit**)
 - Nutrition Facts Panel and ingredient declaration (**not included in page limit**)
 - Process flow diagram (**not included in page limit**)
 - Photograph of the product (**not included in page limit**)
- The **preliminary report** will be judged on the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
Innovativeness of concept	10
Link to DMI/NDC consumer and marketplace insights	10
Product description	5
Process description	5
Use of dairy ingredients (>51% dairy by weight is required)	5
Commercial feasibility/Problem solving	5
Marketing/Potential	5
Safety/shelf life	5
Sub-total	50

- Based on these five-page reports, six entrants will be selected for Phase Two of the competition.

Phase Two: Product/Webinar Presentation

Top six entrants will submit the product for sampling and present via webinar for final judging. The finalist teams must submit enough product for 18 servings. The product (along with storage, preparation and serving instructions) must reach the Dairy Management Inc. office during the **first or second week of April** (details to come closer to the finals).

The webinar will be presented during the **third or fourth week of April** (details to come closer to the finals) at a time mutually agreed upon by teams and judges. Webinar details follow:

- Presentations will be made by up to three student team members.
- Questions from judges may be answered by any student team member (with no participation from faculty advisers).
- Each presentation will be limited to 15 minutes with 10 minutes of additional time for questions.
- A judging panel will make the final assessment and selection. The panel will include objective experts from the dairy industry and members of DMI.
- The varied experience of the panel members allows the entries to be assessed from diverse perspectives as they evaluate and select the winners based on the webinar presentation and final product tasting.
- A 150-point evaluation scale will be used to judge the webinar presentation and product.

Judging Criteria

Criteria	Points
The webinar presentation will be judged on the following criteria:	
Enthusiasm of presentation	5
Slide quality/clarity	5
Organization	10
Professionalism of student(s)	10
Feature of dairy ingredient(s)	5
Overall coverage of material	10
Handling of questions	5
Sub-total	50
The product will be judged on the following criteria:	
Meets expectations (overall liking)	20
Flavor/Aroma	20
Texture/Body/Appearance	20
Ease of use/Consumption	20
Packaging	10
Prominence of dairy	10
Sub-total	100
TOTAL	150



Phase Three: American Dairy Science Association Meeting

The top three teams will be invited to and honored at the American Dairy Science Association Annual Meeting in Raleigh, NC, from June 27-30, 2027. The exact date and time will be communicated closer to the meeting date. Winners also will be featured in promotions, including newsletters, websites and publication articles.

Platinum Dairy Innovator Award of \$10,000 for first place

Gold Dairy Innovator Award of \$7,000 for second place

Silver Dairy Innovator Award of \$4,000 for third place

Dairy Innovator Award of \$2,000 each for the remaining 3 teams that make it to the top six and successfully complete Phase Two of the competition

- DMI will provide up to \$2,000 that can only be used to support travel and registration for winning team members to attend the American Dairy Science Association Annual Meeting in Raleigh, NC, From June 27-30, 2027.
- Cash awards for the top 3 winning teams will be distributed during the ADSA meeting. If the students are unable to attend, award cheques will be sent to faculty adviser/team leader within 30 days of the meeting, for distribution to team members per discretion of the school and adviser.
- Cash awards for the 4th, 5th, and 6th place teams will be sent to faculty adviser/team leader within 30 days of the meeting, for distribution to team members at the discretion of the school and adviser.
- Applicable taxes are the sole responsibility of any winners who receive awards.
- Entry into the contest constitutes an agreement by the contestants to the following:
 - Use of names, likeness, and quotes
 - Recipes, product formulation and process descriptions, and images may be used by Dairy Management Inc./National Dairy Council® in the promotion of its programs and in communications with the food and beverage industry.
 - Availability for press interviews as requested.
 - Use of the product for demonstration purposes
- All product formulations remain property of the entering individuals and/or teams or universities, according to the school's regulations.