



Alice in Dairyland finalists announced in Clark County

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EDITOR'S NOTE: To request a group photo or individual photos of the finalists, email ashley.andre@wisconsin.gov.

MADISON – Six finalists will now start preparing for possibly the longest and most thorough job interview they may ever experience in hopes of becoming the 67th Alice in Dairyland. The announcement was made today by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) at Grassland Dairy in Greenwood.

The finalists for the 67th Alice in Dairyland position are: Allyson Binversie, Zoey Brooks, Katie Dogs, Kristin Klossner, Melissa Ploeckelman and Whitney Rathke. These finalists were selected from an application review and preliminary interview.

“During the next several weeks, I’ll be sharing my experiences as Wisconsin’s agricultural ambassador with these finalists, explaining what it’s like telling the story of Wisconsin’s \$59 billion agriculture community,” said Kristin Olson, the current Alice in Dairyland. “But they will also learn about the diversity of agriculture and agri-businesses here in Clark County, this year’s host county and where one finalist will begin her journey as the 67th Alice in Dairyland.”

Biographies of the finalists include:

Allyson Binversie, Manitowoc, is a Master’s candidate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Gonzaga University, graduating in 2012 from Gonzaga with a degree in Psychology and Certificate in Leadership Studies. While in college, Binversie was Development Intern and Supervisor for the Office of University Relations and currently is Assistant Director of University Marketing and Communications for Chegg. Binversie served as Miss Green Bay Area 2013, promoting her platform “Buy Local, Buy Fresh” through media interviews, classroom lessons and the Miss Wisconsin Pageant. Binversie was the 2008 Manitowoc County Fairest of the Fair and continues to stay involved in fair activities.

Zoey Brooks, Waupaca, will graduate this spring from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in animal science. As the sixth generation on her family’s dairy and grain farm, she looks forward to growing the business in the future. Brooks serves as Dane County Farm Bureau’s Ag in the Classroom coordinator and as a Director At-Large for her Collegiate Farm Bureau. She has held internships with the Food Export Association of the Midwest and with UW-Extension. Brooks has also gained experience working with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association.

Katie Dogs, Watertown, is the public relations manager at Didion Milling. She oversees the company’s marketing, communications and public relations. Dogs grew up on her family’s farm near Theresa. She earned a degree in life sciences communication from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2011. As a student, Dogs completed internships at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Alltech and East Central/Select Sires. Prior to her position at Didion Milling, she was an assistant account executive at Osborn+Barr. Dogs volunteers with Dodge County 4-H and is active in the National Agri-Marketing Association and Agriculture Future of America.

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Kristin Klossner, New Glarus, is a substitute teacher in the New Glarus and Monticello school districts, specializing in special education. Klossner graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where she majored in secondary education with a minor in dairy science. She grew up on her family's farm and raised dairy show heifers, beef steers and show rabbits. Klossner is a local and state leader with 4-H, FFA and the Wisconsin Junior Holstein Association. She is annually part of the Agriculture and Entry Department Staff at the Wisconsin State Fair. Klossner was a Wisconsin Holstein Association Princess Attendant in 2007.

Melissa Ploeckelman, Stetsonville, is the Colby High School and Middle School agricultural education instructor and FFA advisor. She grew up on her family's dairy farm and was very involved in 4-H and FFA. Ploeckelman graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in 2010 with a degree in agricultural education. During college, she studied for a semester in Scotland and was active in several organizations. Ploeckelman was a volunteer coordinator for the 2010 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days in Marathon County. She served as a State FFA Officer in 2006-07 and the Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs in 2009.

Whitney Rathke, Fredonia, is a graduate student at Concordia University Wisconsin and employed as an afterschool educator at Jefferson Elementary in Beaver Dam. She grew up on her family's beef farm and was very active in 4-H and FFA. Rathke graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 2011 with an agribusiness degree and animal science minor. At UW-Platteville, she held leadership roles in Sigma Alpha and was a School of Agriculture teaching assistant. After graduation, Rathke served two year-long terms as an AmeriCorps/VISTA member with UW-Extension Dodge County. She served as the 2007 Ozaukee County Fairest of the Fair.

Alice in Dairyland is the state's agricultural ambassador and travels Wisconsin promoting the state's agriculture industry in speeches, media interviews and school presentations. The 67th Alice in Dairyland will be selected at the conclusion of the three-day Finals in Clark County, May 15 – 17. The 67th Alice in Dairyland will begin her one-year contract position on June 2.

The public is welcome to attend two public events during the Finals in Clark County. Tickets are available for the Question and Answer Dinner on Friday, May 16 at the American Legion Hall in Loyal. The social hour begins at 6:00 p.m. with the dinner and program to follow. Tickets are \$10 per person to attend Friday evening.

On Saturday, May 17, the Banquet and Selection Finale will be held at The El Norteno Banquet Hall in Curtiss. Tickets are available for \$20 per person. The social hour begins at 4:30 p.m., the banquet dinner is at 5:30 p.m. and the selection finale is at 6:45 p.m. For all event information and ticket sales, visit aliceindairyland.com.

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