

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: 75th Alice in Dairyland top candidates announced

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has announced the six top candidates for the 75th Alice in Dairyland position. The six top candidates are Amber Cafferty, Amelia Hayden, Courtney Moser, Taylor Schaefer, Samantha Schuessler, and Charitee Seebecker.

Prior to being selected as top candidates, applicants completed an application and preliminary interview. Over the next eight weeks, the six top candidates will prepare for the three-day Alice in Dairyland Finals, scheduled for May 19-21, 2022 in Dane County. The three-day process includes agribusiness tours, media interviews, an impromptu question and answer session, individual interviews, and candidate presentations. The selection of the 75th Alice in Dairyland will be announced live during the program at the conclusion of the finals on May 21, 2022. The 75th Alice in Dairyland will begin her term on July 5, 2022.

“The Alice in Dairyland selection process takes your communication, interpersonal, and public speaking skills to the next level,” said 74th Alice in Dairyland Julia Nunes. “This process helps the top candidates refine their communications skills that will not only be pivotal in their journey to the 75th Alice in Dairyland Finals, but also in their future careers.”

Candidate Biographies

Amber Cafferty grew up on her family’s dairy and poultry farm in western Wisconsin, where many of her childhood memories included summer days training heifers for the county fair, unloading small hay bales, and feeding calves with her siblings. Growing up, she was active in 4-H and FFA, which helped develop her love

for agriculture into lifelong leadership and communication skills. Cafferty attended the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, where she was involved in the Gopher Club, Beta of Clovia sorority, National Grocers Association, and Agriculture Education and Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow Club. Internships with Minnesota 4-H – Wright County, The Dairy Alliance, and the Minnesota State Fair Competition Department allowed her to further develop her agriculture knowledge. Cafferty graduated in May 2019 with bachelor's degrees in agricultural communications and marketing and animal science. After graduation, she returned to her family's farm before accepting a full-time position with Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin as a marketing and development coordinator.

"It is an honor to be a top Alice in Dairyland candidate," said Cafferty. "As Alice, I will strive to be the role model she was for me growing up as well as cherish the opportunity to share the story of Wisconsin's diverse agricultural commodities and the producers who make it possible."

Amelia Hayden has always loved finding ways to give back to her community through agriculture. She credits her time in 4-H and FFA with showing her the value of service and giving her opportunities to serve the agriculture community. Hayden grew up showing at the Walworth County Fair and was an officer in her local 4-H club and the Walworth County 4-H Junior Leaders' Association. In FFA, Hayden sought out every opportunity to inform others about agriculture. This work led her to become a national winner for her projects related to agri-science research and agriculture education. Hayden served as the 2017-2018 Wisconsin State FFA Vice President and 2018-2019 Wisconsin State FFA President. In these roles, she delivered workshops, keynote speeches, and interviews promoting Wisconsin agriculture and youth involvement to thousands of students and stakeholders.

As a student at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, Hayden has served as president of the Agriculture Education, Communication and Marketing Club, an active member of the Agricultural Business Club, and a Teach Ag Ambassador. While in college, she interned with Vivayic, Inc., which included developing agriculture literacy resources, planning training webinars, and collaborating on media campaigns for numerous national agriculture clients. She is graduating in May 2022 with a bachelor's degree in agriculture education. Hayden intends to become a high school agriculture teacher, where she can continue to serve agriculture and inspire students to become the next generation of Wisconsin agriculturists.

“I am excited to provide authentic agricultural experiences, build partnerships, and expand the program’s reach while serving as Alice. I hope to inspire each Wisconsinite to take pride in their connection to our state’s agriculture,” said Hayden.

Courtney Moser grew up on her family’s registered Holstein dairy farm, Dream Prairie Holsteins, and it was there her love for the dairy industry and wider agriculture community began. Her passion further developed through her dedicated involvement with 4-H, FFA, and the Wisconsin Holstein Association (WHA). At the age of 12, she earned first place in the WHA junior speaking contest where the assigned topic was “Your Future in Agriculture.” In the contest, Moser spoke about the integral role of Alice in Dairyland and her dream to represent Wisconsin’s diverse agriculture industry as the 75th Alice. Her interest continued to grow as she promoted registered Holsteins and the dairy industry as the 2017 WHA Princess. After graduating from Westby Area High School in May 2017, Moser furthered her education at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. Her studies included an internship in Jerome, Idaho with Progressive Publishing as an editorial intern for Progressive Dairy. In December 2020, she earned her Bachelor of Arts in journalism and communication, concentrating on multimedia journalism and organizational and public relations, and receiving a minor in leadership. She is currently serving as the 2021 Vernon County Fairest of the Fair. For the past year, she has been employed as the digital marketing strategist for Valley Fudge & Candy in Coon Valley, Wisconsin. Moser describes her job as “sweet” as she combines her love for agriculture and passion for sharing the story of how Wisconsin butter is used to create deliciously creamy fudge.

“As people are raised further removed from their food source, it is imperative that we share the story of agriculture,” said Moser. “As the 75th Alice in Dairyland, it would be my honor to share the story of Wisconsin agriculture and connect people of all ages and backgrounds to the products, producers, and agribusinesses that fuel and feed us.”

Taylor Schaefer’s fondest memories stem from her family’s beef and crop farm, where raising livestock and serving as a youth leader in the Racine County 4-H program ignited her passion for agriculture. Schaefer went on to study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she was involved in the Association of Women in Agriculture, Badger Dairy Club, and the University of Wisconsin Marching Band. In 2021, she interned with Mayer Beef and Folk Song Farm, where she broadened her knowledge of the Something Special from Wisconsin™ program and

connected with consumers. She has since joined the Animal and Dairy Sciences Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a digital media intern and the Mid-West Farm Report as a farm assistant. In May 2022, she will graduate with bachelor's degrees in animal sciences and life sciences communication and a certificate in digital studies. Upon graduation, she accepted a position with the Mid-West Farm Report in Madison, Wisconsin.

“As a young exhibitor, I looked up to Alice for her contributions towards reconnecting consumers to producers and ability to foster positive relationships between urban and rural community members,” said Schaefer. “As Alice, I will explore Wisconsin’s diverse agriculture industry and share my knowledge with audiences of all demographics across the state.”

Samantha Schuessler enjoys sharing her agriculture story with everyone she meets. Schuessler has a passion for agriculture that was cultivated on her family dairy farm in Antigo, Wisconsin. Her favorite memories were feeding the calves and having her kittens follow her around the barns during chores as a young girl. Growing up she was heavily involved with 4-H and FFA and was often showing horses, sheep, swine, and dairy cattle. Samantha graduated from California Polytechnic State University in June 2020 with a bachelor's degree in dairy science and a minor in agricultural communications. During college, Samantha was on the Cal Poly Dairy Judging Team, involved in the Los Lecheros Dairy Club, and interned for CentralStar Cooperative in the summer of 2019. Samantha has experience in all aspects of the food chain from working on the farm, making cheese, and selling chocolate. Samantha worked for Sartori Cheese making wheels of cheese and sales in the Midwest. She now works for The Hershey Company as a retail sales representative.

“Since I was young, I looked up to Alice in Dairyland as the positive image that represented Wisconsin agriculture,” said Schuessler. “As Alice, I will be able to share my Wisconsin stories while also learning and sharing other Wisconsin agriculture stories with the public.”

Charitee Seebecker of Mauston learned first-hand the work ethic and dedication of Wisconsin farmers. Growing up on her family's registered Holstein dairy farm, feeding calves and milking were just a couple of things that helped keep her busy. After a farm setback and having to transition away from the farm, she turned to FFA and 4-H to continue igniting her passion for agriculture. Wanting to share agriculture's story and the impact that growing up on a farm had on her, Seebecker obtained a bachelor's degree in agriculture business with an emphasis in

communications and marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. In 2016, she shared her knowledge of agriculture while serving as the Juneau County Fairest of the Fair. Throughout college, she was very active in the Pioneer Dairy Club, Agriculture Business Club, Ceres Women's Agricultural Fraternity, and served as co-president of the National Agri-Marketing Association. Upon graduation in May 2018, Seebecker served as an Ameri-Corps Farm to School Specialist for Juneau County. She currently works at the Wisconsin Holstein Association as the director of sales and membership and as a news broadcaster at Hometown Life News in Tomah.

"Serving as the official ambassador for Wisconsin's farmers and processors would be a dream come true," said Seebecker. "Alice in Dairyland has been a role model to me since I first met her at my county fair as a child. It would be an honor to come full circle and now be that role model for other young children. As Alice, I will make it fun to learn about Wisconsin's diverse agriculture industry while sharing my unique experiences growing up and telling the story of our state's food, fuel, and fiber production to highlight the impact that agriculture has on our state's economy."

About Alice in Dairyland

Alice in Dairyland is a full-time communications professional for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Alice program is supported by several partner organizations including Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, Kettle Moraine Mink Breeders Association, Wisconsin Corn Promotion Board, and Midwest Jewelers Association. For more information about the Alice in Dairyland program, visit <https://www.aliceindairyland.com/> and follow Alice online on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).