

Peter will reign as 'Fairest of Fair'

By Amy Smith, Union staff writer | Posted: Monday, July 14, 2014 10:40 am

A Lake Mills woman has been named the 2015 Jefferson County Fairest of the Fair.

Olivia Peter was selected by the judges on the final day of the 162nd county fair. She was crowned at the Wilbur Betschler Memorial Grandstand Sunday between the ceremony and the heats for the Action Auto Demolition Derby by reigning 2013-14 Fairest of the Fair Caitlyn Gerlach.

Peter was one of three women vying for the title. Morgan Stendel of Jefferson, and Cierra Ehrke-Esock of Fort Atkinson also were contestants.

A Lake Mills High School graduate and long-time 4-H member, Peter attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is majoring in dairy science.

She sought the position as an opportunity to not only be an advocate for agriculture but also to further her own personal development.

Though the competition is a longstanding tradition, this year's contest was the first under a new format. In the past, the year's contest has crowned its champion on the first day of the fair, and she has reigned over the remainder of the week at the fairgrounds.

However, Peter was crowned Sunday, during the last of the fair's five-day run, and will return to reign over the 2015 Jefferson County Fair.

The altered schedule is intended to better prepare the winner to represent the county later in state competition.

The Jefferson County Fairest of the Fair competition is filled with interviews, radio commercials, parades, the fair itself and a chance to earn the title of State Fairest of the Fair when the winner goes on to compete at the Annual Wisconsin Association of Fairs Convention in January.

The 2013-14 Jefferson County Fairest of the Fair Caitlyn Gerlach will compete for the county at that convention in January, while Peter will attend the convention as a fair representative to experience the entire fair industry process while gaining knowledge to better serve Jefferson County and the future of the county fair.

By putting off their competition for a year, county fair officials can take a greater part in preparing the girls in hopes of a better return.

Both Gerlach and Peter also will go to the State Fair in August to represent the Jefferson County Fair.



FAIREST OF THE FAIR

Reigning 2013-14 Jefferson County Fairest of the Fair Caitlyn Gerlach crowned Olivia Peter 2015 Fairest of the Fair following a Celebrate Freedom Ceremony Sunday. Also pictured are candidates Morgan Stendel and Cierra Ehrke-Esock. For more photos click [here](#).

This year's Fairest of the Fair season began with the Jefferson County Dairy Breakfast where the three contestants passed out brochures and met with the crowd attending the Fair Park event. Events such as that, prior to the fair, offered an opportunity for this year's judges — Trent Topel, an area businessman from Cambridge; Yvonne Habermann, a returning judge back from a few years' break; and Staci Hoffman, Jefferson County register of deeds — to meet the contestants.

The contestants also participated in a session earlier in the summer at WSLs in Whitewater, recording radio promotions for the fair, a formal interview, luncheon and a group interview. The young women also participated in parades in area communities.

In the competition, contestants were evaluated on professional appearance, community activities, personality, poise, fair knowledge and experience, speaking ability, their written application, the personal interview and radio commercial.

Before the crowning ceremony Sunday, the three contestants answered a final two-part question in the Jefferson County Activity Center.

The first part of the question asked, "As fairest of the fair, you've been invited to be a guest speaker at a county 4-H club. What topic is your presentation about and why?"

Peter said the topic she would discuss was dairy "because it's the one I know the best.

"I could tell them how to walk their cow and how to move their hands, and I could tell them how to pick out the best cow," she added.

The second part of the question asked, "During your presentation, a youth asks what qualities do you possess that encourage you to run for Fairest of the Fair?"

Peter said the quality that most encouraged her to run for Fairest of the Fair is "the ability to speak to anyone and everyone.

"I will walk up to you on the side of the road and I could start a conversation with you about anything," she noted.

Following the final question, Gerlach offered her congratulations to each contestant.

"Getting to know and work with these ladies has been a great pleasure," Gerlach said. "Just remember: it is not about the crown — it is about the experiences and memories you have made."