

## Jennifer Michel earns 'Fairest of Fair' crown

By Alexa Zoellner Union staff writer | Posted: Monday, July 13, 2015 9:26 am

JEFFERSON — Sunday marked the beginning of Jennifer Michel's reign as 2016 Fairest of the Fair.

Michel was selected by the judges as this year's winner on the final day of the 163rd Jefferson County Fair. She was crowned by the 2014-15 Fairest of the Fair, Olivia Peter, at the Wilbert Betschler Memorial Grandstand between the Celebrate Freedom Ceremony and the Action Auto Demolition Derby.

"It's awesome (to have won). It feels very cool," Michel said. "(I'm looking forward to) the fair next year."

Michel, from Waterloo, was one of six women competing for the crown. The rest of this year's Fair Royalty included Kaitlyn Freeman of Fort Atkinson, Lindsey Heideman of Jefferson, KateLynn Heine of Helenville, Sara Mark of Ixonia and Amber Ziebell of Johnson Creek.

"(The fair) was a lot of fun. They actually put a lot of us girls together," Michel said. "We got to travel together and experience it all together — that was the coolest part, when we got to hand out all the ribbons together, and all the 4-Hers and the fair-goers got to see us all together, hanging out and interacting."

A 2013 graduate of Lake Mills High School, Michel now is attending the University of Wisconsin-River Falls for animal science. She is considering work in the animal nutrition field.

Throughout the competition, the Fairest contestants participated in a variety of activities promoting the fair, including dairy breakfasts and parades, producing radio commercials, communicating with businesses and community members, and assisting the reigning Fairest of the Fair throughout fair week.

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

As winner, Michel will go on to compete for the title of Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs in the Annual Wisconsin Association of Fairs Convention in January of 2017.

Peter will compete for the title in 2016 with Michel attending as a representative of the Jefferson County Fair.



### FAIREST OF THEM ALL

FAIREST OF THEM ALL — Jennifer Michel of Waterloo was crowned the 2016 Fairest of the Fair for the Jefferson County Fair on Sunday. For more fair photos, click [here](#). — Daily Union photos by Alexa Zoellner.

“(I’m looking forward to going to the State Fair), to watch it and take it all in,” Michel said. “I’m a little nervous right now (when I think about competing in state), but I think when I go to watch Olivia Peter, I’ll have it under my belt and I think I’ll be okay.”

Prior to the crowning ceremony Sunday, the contestants were asked a final two-part question in the Jefferson County Activity Center.

The first part of the question asked what qualified them to be the Jefferson County Fairest of the Fair.

“What qualifies me to be the Jefferson County Fairest of the Fair is that I grew up in this county,” Michel said. “I have been in 4-H for 11 years. I have shown pigs and horses, and been involved in many activities throughout the year. I also showed photography and sewing. I know a lot of kids.

“I love being involved in this fair,” she added. “I come to this fair every year and it’s the best experience I have, and I want to show that to the rest of the community and other surrounding counties on what Jefferson County offers to the youth.”

The second part of the question asked the contestants what one goal they would like to accomplish during their reign.

“My goal is to encourage the younger generation to get out in the public and see what’s out there — join new clubs, run for Fairest of the Fair, run for Equine Ambassador, run for positions that are outside the box, outside your comfort zone — and become your own person,” Michel said.

The judges — Staci Hoffman of Jefferson, the Jefferson County register of deeds; Yvonne Habermann of Watertown, who is in her ninth year judging the contest; and Trent Topel of Cambridge, who is in his sixth year judging the contest — all said that it was a close race and that the final question was the deciding factor.

“The girls were all amazing this year,” Hoffman said. “There isn’t one that we’ve had any issues with and everybody has just been an awesome participant.”

During the final question, Peter wished the winner good luck.

“I hope (the winner has) as much fun as I did,” she said. “I hope they do even more than I did because I really wish I would have done a whole lot more than I got to do.”