



## 77th Alice in Dairyland Top Candidates Announced

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*Editor's note: Download individual headshots [here](#).*

MADISON, Wis – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has announced the six top candidates to become the 77th Alice in Dairyland. The candidates are Cierra Essock, Halei Heinzl, Katrina Hoesly, Michaela King, Kiley Pagel, and Lauren Siemers.

Prior to being selected, the top candidates completed an application and preliminary interview. Over the next two months, they will participate in a rigorous interview process that will allow them to showcase the communications and public relations skills required to be the 77th Alice in Dairyland. All top candidates will receive media and speaking training, earning them a DATCP marketing and communications certificate at the conclusion of the process.

This training process will prepare the candidates for the Alice in Dairyland Finals, scheduled for May 2-4, 2024, in Door County. The three-day Finals includes agribusiness tours, media interviews, an impromptu question and answer session, candidate presentations, and more. The selection of the 77th Alice in Dairyland will be announced at a public event on May 4, 2024, at the Stone Harbor Resort in Sturgeon Bay, and she will begin her term on July 8, 2024.

“While only one of these well-qualified individuals will be selected as the 77th Alice in Dairyland, all six can utilize the skills developed over these next few months to become lifelong agriculture advocates,” said Ashley Hagenow, 76th Alice in Dairyland. “It is exciting to know that one of these finalists will continue the tradition of sharing the importance of agriculture across Wisconsin to students, teachers, farmers, business owners, and everyone in between.”

### Candidate Biographies

**Cierra Essock, Fox Lake**, is the agricultural educator and FFA advisor at Hustisford Junior and Senior High School. Essock grew up helping on her family's dairy farm in Fort Atkinson. In 2015, she served as the Wisconsin Holstein Princess Attendant. Essock graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in 2017 with a major in Agricultural Education and a minor in Dairy Science. On campus, she was active in the River Falls Dairy Club and WRFW radio station. Through the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators organization, Essock received the state Teacher Turn the Key Scholarship Award in 2022.

**Halei Heinzl, Oconomowoc**, is a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying Life Sciences Communication. Heinzl was active in her high school's FFA chapter. Before starting at UW-Madison, Heinzl graduated from the Farm and Industry Short Course program with certificates in Agribusiness Management and Dairy Farm Management. Heinzl is involved with the Babcock House Student Cooperative, Science Communication Club, UW Polo Club, and serves on the board of the Wisconsin Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni Association. Heinzl has held internships with the Farm and Industry Short Course program, Professional Dairy Producers, and worked with the Wisconsin State Fair Dairy Promotion Board.

**Katrina Hoesly, Denmark**, is a student at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Marketing Communications and Agricultural Business. She has held campus leadership positions in the Agricultural Business & Marketing Society, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences Student Advisory Council, UW-River Falls Dairy Club, and Collegiate Farm Bureau. Hoesly also interned with Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, Compeer Financial, American Farm Bureau Federation, Culver's Franchising System, National FFA, and World Dairy Expo. She was involved in 4-H and FFA, including serving in a leadership role as a Wisconsin State FFA Officer.

**Michaela King, Big Bend**, grew up in southeastern Wisconsin on her family's beef and crop farm. King was active in 4-H, showing beef and dairy at the county and state level. She studied Journalism and Photography, with a minor in Management, at the University of Minnesota. King was a member of Gopher Dairy Club and Clovia. King was selected as the Waukesha County Fairest of the Fair in 2019. She was an editorial intern for *Hay & Forage Grower* and *El Independiente* magazines, and an online marketing manager at *Hoard's Dairyman*. King is currently a public relations manager with Filament/broadhead.

**Kiley Pagel, Kewaunee**, will graduate in May from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. She is presently the marketing advisor for the Pagel Family Businesses. Her responsibilities include overseeing public relations, managing social media platforms, coordinating events, and organizing tours. Additionally, Pagel has assumed a multifaceted role at Dairy Dreams LLC, a subsidiary of her family business, where she handles office support functions such as human resources, reception, and data entry.

**Lauren Siemers, Kiel**, will graduate in May from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh with a degree in Marketing. She was raised on her family's dairy farm, Siemers Holsteins, in northeast Wisconsin. Siemers has actively participated in Wisconsin's agricultural community, staying engaged in 4-H, FFA, the Wisconsin Holstein Association (WHA), and Holstein Association USA. Through these associations, she had the unique opportunity to serve as the 2019 WHA Princess, compete in speaking contests, and travel extensively across the country and to Scotland to evaluate dairy cattle. In 2023, Siemers was honored as a National Distinguished Junior Member Finalist by Holstein Association USA.

### **About Alice in Dairyland**

Alice in Dairyland is a one-year, full-time public relations position with 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, Goodman's Jewelers, Wisconsin Potato Industry Board, Ginseng Board of Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Beef Council. For more information about the 77th Alice in Dairyland Finals in Door County and the Alice in Dairyland program, visit [aliceindairyland.com](http://aliceindairyland.com) and follow Alice online on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

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