



2011 Farmfest



Minnesota Pork Ambassador to be named Aug. 3 during Farmfest

The 2012 Minnesota Pork Ambassador and the first and second runners-up will be selected Wednesday, Aug. 3 at Farmfest. The public is encouraged to attend the program. The pork ambassador candidates will be introduced and the winners announced at a special 11:50 a.m. program in the Forum Tent. Program emcee will be farm broadcaster Lynn Ketelsen of the Linder Farm Network.

A three-judge panel will select the top three individuals from a field of 18 county pork ambassadors. The candidate judging takes place on Aug. 1-3 and the process includes a personal interview with the judges, public presentation on a swine-related topic, written essay and group activity.

The public is also encouraged to attend the pork ambassador candidates' public presentations from 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 2, in the Minnesota Soybean/Minnesota Pork Tent (exhibitor #618).

The Minnesota Pork Ambassador and runners-up will represent the state's 4,000 pork producing families at various educational and promotional functions throughout the year. The top placing individual earns a \$1,500 scholarship, and first and second runners-up receive \$750 and \$500 scholarships, respectively. Judges also recognize the writer of the best essay with a \$250 scholarship and the ambassadors will select a congeniality winner.

Pork Ambassador Competition

Monday, Aug. 1

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| 11:00 a.m.-3:45 p.m. | Pork Ambassador Personal Interviews
Select Inn, Redwood Falls |
| 5:30 p.m. | Pork Ambassador Supper & Orientation Meeting
Pizza Ranch, Redwood Falls |

Tuesday, Aug. 2

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|-----------------|---|
| 8:00-11:30 a.m. | Pork Ambassador Presentations
Minnesota Soybean/Minnesota Pork Tent #618 |
| 2:00-4:30 p.m. | Pork Ambassador Presentations |
| 5:30 p.m. | Pork Party, 4-H Building
Redwood County Fairgrounds, Redwood Falls |
| 6:30 p.m. | Biodiesel Tractor Pull
Grandstand, Redwood County Fairgrounds
Redwood Falls |

Wednesday, Aug. 3

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Group Activity |
| 11:15 a.m. | Pork Ambassador Group Pictures |
| 11:50 a.m. | Pork Ambassador Awards Program, Forum Tent |

MINNESOTA PORK BOARD

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Mankato, MN 56001
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Blue Earth County Pork Ambassador

Ryan Strobel

Parents: Greg and Robin Strobel, Pemberton

Essay: Shortage of Swine Veterinarians

Ryan Strobel is a veterinary medicine student at the University of Minnesota. His career goals are to work as a swine veterinarian and to remain actively involved on his parent's crop and hog farm.

His experience working with pigs and crops, and his exposure to other agribusinesses has given Strobel a broad view of the swine industry and agriculture. As Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Strobel says he will utilize his hog and crop knowledge to educate others and to increase pork consumption through promotional events.

Qualities that he would bring to the state pork ambassador position are an ability to work with others and a knack for simplifying complicated information. Through a variety of experiences, Strobel has

also developed organizational and leadership skills, and is recognized for his dependability.

"I will work as hard as I can because I know how important it is to advocate for pork," he said.

Strobel cites feed prices, animal welfare, disease control, pork prices and large animal veterinarian shortages as issues facing the industry. As solutions, he suggests tools to help producers with nutrient management, feed efficiency and precision feeding; public education on animal care practices; greater disease control through biosecurity; and increase pork demand through consumer promotions and pork cooking demonstrations.



East Central Counties Pork Ambassador

Kayla Michels

Parents: Norman Michels, Cambridge

Essay: Is it Safe to Eat?

Kayla Michels will attend Minneapolis Business College in the fall where she will focus her studies in the medical field. Her goals include pursuing a medically related occupation and returning to production agriculture, raising beef, hogs and crops.

A challenge facing the pork industry is an increasing public belief that animals are humans and it's unethical to raise animals for meat and other uses. These issues can be addressed through the pork industry's participation in face-to-face dialogue with consumers on how farmers raise and care for their livestock. As Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Michels says her enthusiasm, plus leadership

and teamwork skills will help enhance the growing need for public education on food production practices.

As an active 4-H member, Michels served in many leadership roles and helped mentor young 4-H members in the livestock programs. She also credits 4-H for her own interest in farm animals and agriculture.

"4-H has given me amazing opportunities," she said. "I would not be where I am today if not for 4-H."



Fillmore County Pork Ambassador

Aaron Gillespie

Parents: Jeff and Jackie Gillespie, Fountain

Essay: Natural Resources

Aaron Gillespie attends the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, where his major is agribusiness and his minor is crop and soil science. After college, he plans to farm fulltime in partnership with his parents.

Gillespie says his background in farming has taught him that "not everything goes as planned" and his experience milking cows and starting a bale-wrapping business has shown him a variety of farming operations and improved his business skills.

"All of these jobs have, without a doubt, prepared me for the future, from learning how my farm works to how other farms work and how to deal with people. These are all skills I will use for the rest of my life."

A pressing issue for pork producers is explaining pork production practices to the general public, such as the use of confinement housing to those who believe pigs should be raised outdoors and on pasture. Through his own experience answering this question, Gillespie says discussing the positive influence on pig health and pig care helps people understand confinement housing systems.

Gillespie says being Minnesota Pork Ambassador would provide him with ways to tell others about the opportunities within pork production. His experience in FFA, 4-H, and as state pork ambassador runner-up have played a role in further developing his leadership and communication skills. Gillespie is active in FFA and is working towards the FFA American Degree.



Fillmore County Pork Ambassador

Katie Winslow

Parents: Scott and Jean Winslow, Fountain

Essay: Pork Ambassador

Katie Winslow majors in agricultural education and minors in political science at the University of Minnesota. After college, Winslow's career path includes becoming an ag instructor or working with commodity or farm groups carrying out promotional and educational programs.

"My political science background will help me in any career, as well as one at the state capitol where the telling of our story is vitally important," she said.

Her involvement in numerous activities, including FFA and 4-H, contribute to a skill set that would be beneficial as Minnesota Pork Ambassador. She has competed in national FFA extemporaneous speaking competitions, has served as an FFA and 4-H officer, and

earned state FFA degrees and local FFA proficiency awards. This background has taught her responsibility, teamwork, accountability, and quick and thoughtful messaging.

"A short useful fact goes a lot further than long paragraphs of details because they are easier to remember," she said.

Winslow says that consumer and public education are challenges that can be addressed by pork commodity groups. Winslow cites the county and state pork ambassador programs, point-of-purchase pork recipes and cooking tips, and the new pork promotion campaign as ways to reach consumers with fun and educational learning experiences.



Freeborn County Pork Ambassador

Tyler Adix

Parents: Debra Adix and the late Steve Adix, Alden

Essay: Breaking Down the Barrier

Tyler Adix will study general agriculture at South Dakota State University, Brookings, this fall and plans to farm full time after completing his degree. Adix served as chapter FFA president, earned the State Farmer Degree and state FFA proficiency awards in diversified crop production and diversified ag production.

Adix says his leadership, communication and agricultural experience are qualities he can bring to the position of Minnesota Pork Ambassador. The ambassador role is an opportunity to counter public misunderstanding about farming practices by interacting with the general public.

Communication barriers separate farmers and the public, resulting in misinformation on how farmers care for the environment and livestock. To tackle this challenge, Adix suggests pork producers share their first-hand knowledge with others and encourage farm visits to show people agricultural and livestock production practices.

The experience of his father's passing nearly three years ago influenced his decision to enter farming after college. "I was able to come to the conclusion that I wanted to farm more than ever, but first I needed to get a quality education in order to do my dad and the farm justice," he said.



Le Sueur County Pork Ambassador

Leah Sample

Parents: Mark and Teresa Sample, Le Sueur

Essay: Pork Producers Care

Leah Sample will graduate from the University of Minnesota with a degree in animal science and swine production. Her career goals include using her swine experience and education working for a commodity group such as the Minnesota Pork Board.

Sample says the Minnesota Pork Ambassador program is an opportunity for young adults to serve as a representative and educator for the pork industry and to put a name and face to the pork industry. As a fourth generation pork producer with extensive 4-H and leadership experience, the state pork ambassador position would give Sample a chance to educate and promote the industry she truly enjoys.

A challenge facing the pork industry is improving its public image amongst consumers. Sample says one-on-one interaction with consumers is a beneficial way to gain public trust.

She cites her part-time job at a grocery store as an example of one-on-one consumer advocacy. While working at the meat counter, a consumer asked her about pork safety and pork preparation. The 30-minute visit resulted in Sample sharing nutritional and cooking information.

Sample says her 4-H swine project and show ring experience has influenced her career choice. She is a member of the U of M Block and Bridle Club and serves as county 4-H swine superintendent.



Le Sueur County Pork Ambassador

Brett Schwartz

Parents: Alan and Barb Schwartz, Le Sueur

Essay: The Public's View on Animal Control

Brett Schwartz plans to return to his parent's farm and continue raising hogs and crops after completing college. If selected Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Schwartz says it would enhance his involvement in the swine industry and enable him to reach more people with information about pork production. His experience and knowledge of pork production would be beneficial as state pork ambassador, as well as his people skills.

"I am able to easily have conversations with people and I am not afraid to get up in front of people and talk," he said.

Schwartz says public misconceptions on how farmers raise and

treat their pigs are among the challenges within the industry. Pork producers need to speak with the public about their farms and also the nutritional value of pork.

4-H has played a big role in the goals Schwartz has set. Experiences such as county fair swine superintendent, showing pigs at the fair and volunteering at the state fair Oink Booth have increased his knowledge and involvement within pork production. In addition to 4-H, picking a neighbor's sweet corn for sale in town, helping on a dairy farm and doing other jobs for area farmers expanded his knowledge of agriculture.



Martin County Pork Ambassador

Hayley Faber

Parents: Donny and Dawn Faber, Sherburn

Essay: Pork Safety

Hayley Faber will be a freshman at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, majoring in agricultural education. Her goal is to return to teach agriculture in southern Minnesota.

Faber says selection as Minnesota Pork Ambassador would provide her with many opportunities to help the pork industry improve its image with the general public. By utilizing her swine knowledge and leadership skills, she would improve the connection between pork producers and consumers.

Faber says her experience at the Minnesota Ag Ambassador Institute helped her realize public education is important to

agriculture's future. Inaccurate depictions of pork production practices through social media videos, photos and articles is a challenge for pork producers because an unsuspecting public may believe these negative messages and discontinue eating pork.

"This hurts the industry because it can make people not want to eat the pork we produce," she said. "The pork industry can prove that the internet pictures and videos are wrong by showing the public how we really treat our animals by opening up our barns and letting the public get a real look at how we take care of our livestock," she said.



Martin County Pork Ambassador

Matraca Steen

Parents: Brian and LeeAnn Steen, Sherburn

Essay: The Pork Industry: Misinformation and How We Can Fix It

Matraca Steen attends North Dakota State University, Fargo, where her majors are agricultural and biosystems engineering and biotechnology. Her career goal is to research and develop vaccines that address swine diseases and food safety issues.

As Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Steen says she would help educate the public about the food chain and why it's important to support U.S. farmers and agriculture. Personal qualities she would bring to the position are leadership experience, a strong interest in the pork industry and public speaking abilities.

"I have been involved in many activities, in addition to agriculture, so I hope I could find something in common with

every person I meet," she said.

An issue facing the pork industry is negative public perceptions, which she said can be addressed through education and putting a face with the industry.

Steen is active in 4-H and FFA. She worked as coordinator for Donate a Row, a program that brings fresh garden products to the local food shelf. This experience exposed her to the financial difficulties many people, especially the elderly, have buying food and it influenced her decision to enter a career field that can result in abundant and affordable pork.



Mower County Pork Ambassador

Lee Kloeckner

Parents: John and Barb Kloeckner, Adams

Essay: Food Safety

Lee Kloeckner will be a freshman at the University of Minnesota with his career sights set on becoming a large animal veterinarian and owning his own vet clinic, and continuing his involvement in livestock and production agriculture.

As Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Kloeckner would promote the pork industry and share his knowledge with others, plus use the opportunity to meet new people. The personal qualities that he can offer as state ambassador are leadership and communication skills, which he developed through his 4-H and FFA experiences.

Kloeckner's FFA involvement had a positive influence on his career

choice and his desire to remain actively involved in agriculture. Through FFA, he formed useful life skills, such as setting and achieving goals. In addition to working on his parent's swine and crop farm, Kloeckner is a milk technician at a nearby dairy. This experience also contributes to his desire to pursue a career in animal science.

Among the challenges confronting the pork industry are negative messages from activist groups opposed to livestock production. Kloeckner says public education and pork industry advertising campaigns are amongst the tools to address misinformation about pork production.



Olmsted County Pork Ambassador

Kevin Welter

Parents: Randy and Myrna Welter, Stewartville

Essay: Economic Challenge

Kevin Welter will be attending South Dakota State University, Brookings, where he will major in agricultural and biosystems engineering and minor in business. His college goals include maintaining a high grade point average and graduating with honors.

Welter says sharing his background and knowledge in pork and educating others about food production are reasons he would like to be Minnesota Pork Ambassador.

"I would like to have the opportunity to share the pork message with people who do not know it," Welter said.

His experience growing up on a farrow-to-finish hog farm and caring for swine from birth to harvest are qualities he can bring

to the position of state ambassador. His two years of service as a regional FFA officer has also helped develop his public speaking skills and time management abilities.

Welter says the media's portrayal of pork is a major challenge for the industry, but it is an obstacle that can be overcome through public education and informational campaigns. Among educational ideas is a farrow-to-finish farm that is open for public visits and where people can view typical production practices.

Welter credits his German language instructor, John Difley, for positively influencing his career goals because Difley taught his students how to set and accomplish goals.



Pipestone County Pork Ambassador

Clayton Johnson

Parents: Curt and Diane Johnson, Jasper

Essay: Pork Quality Assurance Plus

Clayton Johnson is a student at South Dakota State University, Brookings, where his major is agriculture systems technology. This major prepares students for many agricultural career paths, including the possibility of his returning to farm with his parents.

Johnson's enthusiasm for pork production and his motivational and leadership skills are qualities he would bring to the position of Minnesota Pork Ambassador.

"I enjoy meeting the public and engaging in conversations about my family's farm and way of life," he said.

Johnson says involvement as a county pork ambassador,

experiences as a Minnesota Ag Ambassador Institute participant and networking with others in agriculture has shown him the opportunities within agriculture and influenced his decision to seek a career in agriculture.

The pork industry's image and antibiotic use in livestock are critical issues facing producers. Johnson cites programs such as Pork Quality Assurance Plus, Transport Quality Assurance and Operation Main Street as industry programs that can build public confidence in pork products and pork production.

"I feel these efforts by the industry need to continue and expand," he said.



Redwood County Pork Ambassador

Brady Welu

Parents: John and Theresa Welu, Milroy

Essay: New Option for H1N1

Brady Welu is an agricultural engineering major at South Dakota State University, Brookings, where he also takes additional classes in production agriculture. His career goals are to return to his parent's farm and construction company, and to utilize his engineering degree.

As Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Welu would work to protect agriculture through public education and to expand his network of agricultural associates. As state ambassador, Welu would put into action his experience and confidence to talk about crop and livestock farming, and would build relationships with the general public by listening to their concerns.

"I want to answer questions from the public and put to rest any negative misconceptions that may arise," Welu said.

Welu has earned many academic honors in math and science, is active in 4-H and FFA, and volunteers within his community, church and school. His participation in extra-curricular activities and growing up on a farm has positively influenced Welu. Through these experiences he has developed public speaking and team building skills, mechanical and construction abilities and an appreciation for completing jobs that have a professional appearance.



Renville County Pork Ambassador

Lisa Roker

Parents: Jon and Karen Roker, Bird Island

Essay: Sharing the True Story

Lisa Roker will be a freshman at the University of Minnesota and would like to become a large animal veterinarian. As a veterinarian, Roker says she would help farmers raise healthy livestock, plus work to educate consumers and advocate for agriculture.

Pork production is a way of life for Roker, which is why she will work hard to promote the swine industry as Minnesota Pork Ambassador. Her positive attitude, work ethic, public speaking skills and agricultural knowledge are qualities she can bring to the position.

Among issues facing the pork industry is media misinformation to the general public on agricultural and livestock production

methods. Roker says it is important that the pork industry focuses its efforts on education and that pork producers contribute their time to inform consumers about their livelihood.

4-H and FFA have influenced Roker's life by helping her discover her passion caring for and showing swine. This interest in swine and livestock has inspired her career path, given her opportunities to meet many people and taught her that hard work and dedication can lead to positive rewards. Her off-farm job as a waitress has contributed to being a responsible, problem solver with an ability to answer consumer's questions.



Scott County Pork Ambassador

Maria Brekke

Parents: Jon and Barbara Brekke, Shakopee

Essay: Why Pork Producers Need To Be Politically Active

Maria Brekke will be a freshman at the University of Minnesota. Although her career goals are undecided, she hopes to remain connected to the swine industry as an educator and advocate.

"It is important for consumers to know as much as possible about the pork industry from producers, rather than garbled versions of the story from popular media and theories not confirmed by research," she said.

Brekke says she would utilize her public speaking and presentation skills and her industry knowledge to educate others if selected as Minnesota Pork Ambassador. These are abilities she gained through her experience in 4-H doing demonstration and communication projects.

As a suburbanite, she interacts with the non-farming population on a regular basis. Brekke says many people do not know the basics of agriculture or where their food comes from. As state pork ambassador, her goal will be to provide correct information on how farmers care for the environment and livestock, pork quality and food safety.

Economies of scale and the environment are issues the pork industry can address through research on balancing profitability with the environment and animal health.

Experiences that have influenced Brekke are participation in 4-H, serving as National 4-H Conference delegate to Washington, D.C. and the emphasis her family places on hard work and perseverance.



Scott County Pork Ambassador

Matthew Hanson

Parents: Allen and Theresa Hanson, Jordan

Essay: The Public

Matthew Hanson is an animal science major at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. His decision to enter a career relating to livestock has been influenced by working at dairy, beef and hog farms. Hanson says his farm employment, work experience at a lumber yard, in addition to his 4-H and FFA experiences have helped develop his communication skills and sense of responsibility and reliability.

If named Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Hanson says he would promote the pork industry and strive to meet as many people as possible, both within and outside of agriculture.

“I am outgoing, not afraid of crowds and I am always willing to meet new people,” he said.

The current issue Hanson believes challenges the industry is the negative portrayal of animal husbandry practices in the media, which places too much attention on the negative and provides too little information on the positive.

“We need to get the word out and show everyone how well the animals are treated, instead of hearing about freak cases of animal abuse,” he said.



Stevens County Pork Ambassador

Natalie Johnston

Parents: Lee and Judy Johnston, Morris

Essay: Pigs: Not Just a Pork Chop

Natalie Johnston is pursuing a degree in animal science at the University of Minnesota, preparing for a career in animal health and pharmaceuticals.

Her experiences in FFA and 4-H influenced her career choice and her ability to set and achieve goals. The programs have instilled organizational, problem-solving, leadership and communication skills and fueled her passion for animal agriculture.

“The lessons I have learned in these activities will help me become successful in achieving my educational, professional and personal goals,” she said.

Johnston says the pork industry is an exciting and vibrant segment of Minnesota agriculture, resulting in her desire to promote pork and educate others. The state pork ambassador post would provide her opportunities to learn more about pork products and production methods and to promote Minnesota pig farmers.

Johnston says international pork trade is a challenge that the pork industry needs to continually pursue and maintain because 25 percent of U.S. pork production is exported. While the export market is beneficial to U.S. pork producers’ profitability, it requires vigilance to maintain stability in the countries that buy U.S. pork and to monitor for potential export market threats.



Watonwan County Pork Ambassador

Shelby Peterson

Parents: Rakki and Diane Peterson, Butterfield

Essay: Teaching the Future Leaders

Shelby Peterson is a student at the University of Minnesota, Morris, where she is earning a communications degree with plans to return to farming and to work as a television reporter.

If selected Minnesota Pork Ambassador, Peterson says she would enjoy sharing her knowledge of agriculture and pork production with children and the general public. Her background raising hogs and promoting pork, and her participation in 4-H and FFA, helped develop qualities useful for the state pork ambassador position.

“My many years of 4-H have taught me to become a better public speaker, which helps me speak clearly to the public,” she said.

Peterson says the threat of a corn shortage resulting from delayed planting, loss of corn acres to flooding and increases in alternative fuel demand, is an immediate and serious issue challenging pork producers. The pork industry can address the shortages of livestock feed through continued research into alternative feed sources and improving feed efficiency.

Peterson says her decision to attend the U of M, Morris, positively influenced her career goals because it encourages communication majors to specialize and the small community atmosphere provides an excellent educational setting.

Pork Ambassador Candidate Schedule

Interviews

A three-judge panel will interview candidates on Aug. 1 at the Select Inn, Redwood Falls.

Time	Name	County Association
11:00 a.m.	Brady Welu	Redwood
11:15 a.m.	Lisa Roker	Renville
11:30 a.m.	Shelby Peterson	Watonwan
11:45 a.m.	Clayton Johnson	Pipestone
12:00 p.m.	Matthew Hanson	Scott
12:15 p.m.	Leah Sample	Le Sueur
12:30 p.m.	Lee Kloeckner	Mower
12:45 p.m.	Matraca Steen	Martin
1:15 p.m.	Katie Winslow	Fillmore
1:30 p.m.	Ryan Strobel	Blue Earth
1:45 p.m.	Brett Schwartz	Le Sueur
2:00 p.m.	Hayley Faber	Martin
2:15 p.m.	Aaron Gillespie	Fillmore
2:30 p.m.	Kevin Welter	Olmsted
2:45 p.m.	Maria Brekke	Scott
3:00 p.m.	Natalie Johnston	Stevens
3:15 p.m.	Kayla Michels	East Central
3:30 p.m.	Tyler Adix	Freeborn

Presentations

The public is invited to attend the ambassador candidate presentations on Aug. 2 in exhibitor tent 618.

Time	Name	County Association
8:00 a.m.	Maria Brekke	Scott
8:15 a.m.	Kevin Welter	Olmsted
8:30 a.m.	Brett Schwartz	Le Sueur
8:45 a.m.	Lee Kloeckner	Mower
10:30 a.m.	Matraca Steen	Martin
10:45 a.m.	Brady Welu	Redwood
11:00 a.m.	Matthew Hanson	Scott
11:15 a.m.	Hayley Faber	Martin
2:00 p.m.	Ryan Strobel	Blue Earth
2:15 p.m.	Leah Sample	Le Sueur
2:30 p.m.	Clayton Johnson	Pipestone
2:45 p.m.	Lisa Roker	Renville
3:00 p.m.	Shelby Peterson	Watonwan
3:15 p.m.	Natalie Johnston	Stevens
3:30 p.m.	Katie Winslow	Fillmore
3:45 p.m.	Tyler Adix	Freeborn
4:00 p.m.	Aaron Gillespie	Fillmore
4:15 p.m.	Kayla Michels	East Central

Farmfest Hours

Tuesday, Aug. 2	8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Wednesday, Aug. 3	8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Thursday, Aug. 4	8 a.m.–4 p.m.

Farmfest Admission

\$10 per person
18 and under are free
Free Parking

Farmfest Address

Farmfest, Junction Hwys. 67 & 13
Gilfillan Estates
28366 County Highway 13
Morgan, MN 56266

Driving Directions to Farmfest From Redwood Falls

Follow Hwy 67 East. Show site on left hand side.

From Morgan

Follow Hwy 67 West. Show site on right hand side.

From Jackpot Junction

Follow Hwy 13 South. Show site on right.



THANK YOU 2011 Minnesota Pork

Ambassadors for your commitment to pork promotion and consumer education. The outgoing ambassadors are (left to right) second runner-up Aaron Gillespie, Minnesota Pork Ambassador David Berning and first runner-up James Roe.