

Natalie Welch Becomes Pennsylvania Dairy Princess

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— Natalie Welch hobbled on stage. Dressed as an elderly woman, she soon shed her disguise to portray an expectant mother. By the evening's end, the 17-year-old donned a light green gown and a sparkling crown. But this time, there was no role playing involved.

For giving blue ribbon performances in a speech, a skit presentation, and answering an impromptu question, Natalie Dawn Welch topped the competition to become Pennsylvania's 38th Dairy Princess.

"Clothes change, attitudes change, and people change, but one thing doesn't change," Dawn said. "What you put into your body and mind now affects you later."

In her new job as spokesperson for the dairy industry, Dawn plans to spread the "milk message" across the state. "What you eat and drink now will decide whether or not you ride a wheelchair or a bicycle when you're 80 years old," she said.

The Somerset teen-ager was one of 31 county dairy princesses to compete for the state title on September 24 at Sheraton Inn-East, Harrisburg.

The two alternates who will assist Natalie with state promotion are First Alternate Rachel Tanis from Centre County and Second Alternate Melissa Bicksler from Berks County.

The pageant followed two days of judging. Each contestant needed to perform a skit presentation and a speech promoting the use of dairy products. Each also needed to compile a scrapbook detailing the promotional activities completed.

Two winners in each category were selected for awards. Natalie was the only contestant to clinch wins in both speech and presentation.

In addition to Natalie, the other outstanding speech recipient was Virginia Morningstar of Mercer County. Honorable mention went to Melissa Mellott of Franklin County and Farin Weltner of Beaver-Lawrence.

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Pennsylvania Dairy Princess Natalie Dawn Welch will be assisted in promotional duties by First Alternate Rachel Tanis, left, and Second Alternate Melissa Bicksler.

Homestead Notes



Shannon Hoffman, left, and Shannon Semmel won the best scrapbook awards.



Natalie in disguise.



Speech and presentation awards are wrapped up by Natalie Welch, center, who won awards in both categories; Virginia Morningstar, left, for her speech, and Susan Pardoe for her presentation.



New York, New Jersey, and Maryland state dairy princesses join Pennsylvania royalty on stage.



One of the outstanding speech awards went to Virginia Morningstar, center. The Mercer countian's speech paid tribute to her father's many abilities as family man, vet, electrician, plumber, and more. She ended with "I am a farmer's daughter and I'm proud of it."