

Isabella C. Haen

2018 Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs

13,637 miles. That's all it took to further my passion for Wisconsin fairs and agriculture. With every mile I drove, I reflected upon the history of our great state as I drove by historical markers. With every step I took on our state's fairgrounds, I shared my story of agriculture and my passion for the fair industry. On the sunset of my last fair, all I could say was how incredibly proud I was of myself, our youth, and the volunteers who made up our 2018 fair season.

As summer approached, June Dairy Month kicked off my travels. I was excited to be more than just an attendee at a Breakfast on the Farm. Having the opportunity to speak in front of seven large breakfast crowds gave me the opportunity to inform attendees about the upcoming fair season and my involvement in the agricultural industry. Of course, eating all those delicious breakfasts was a top highlight and at every event they surely knew right away how much I enjoy food!

The top question I was asked this summer; what is your favorite part about being fairest?

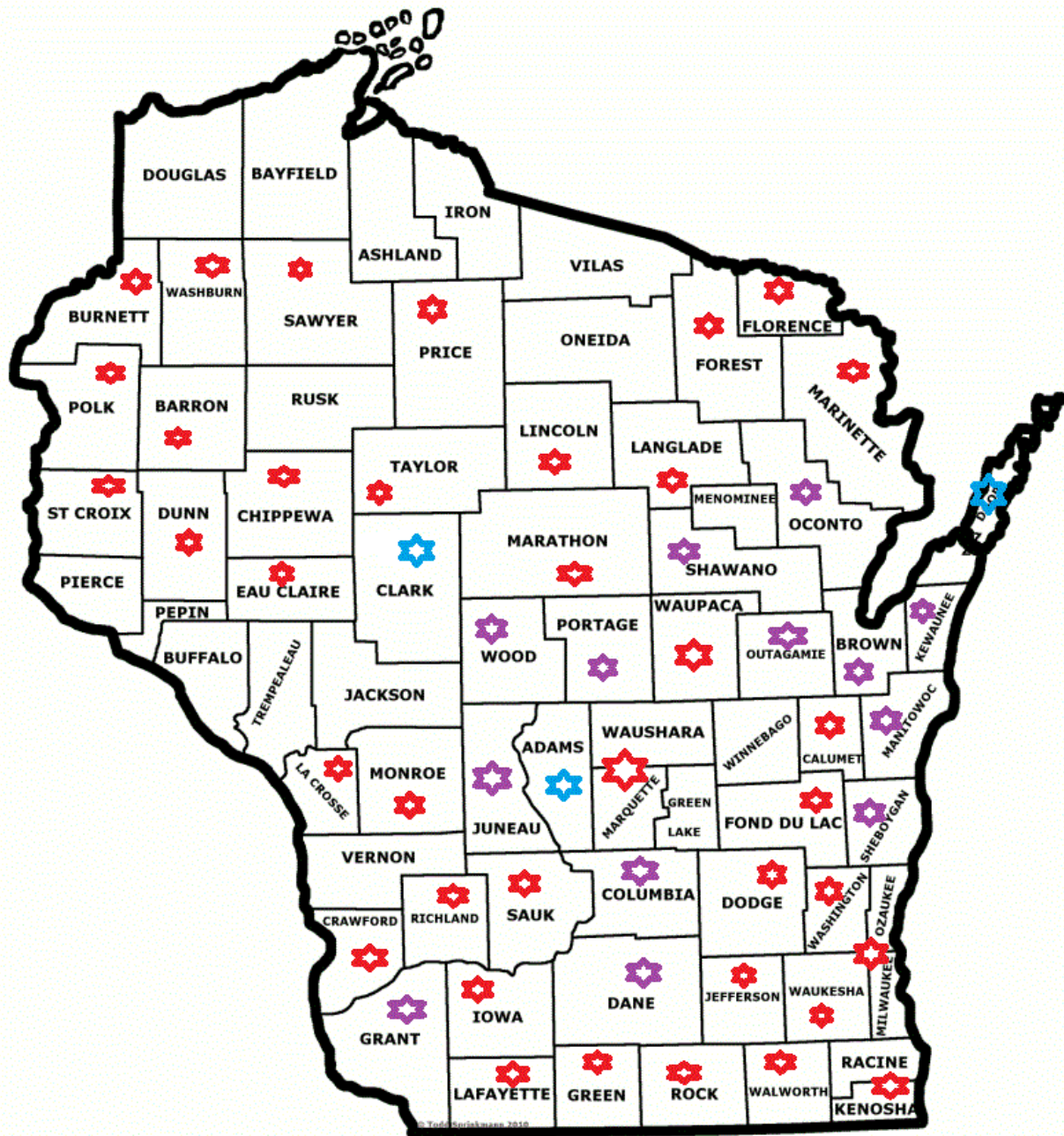
Being Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs, I had the opportunity to serve as a hostess of the 2018 Wisconsin State Fair, presented by U.S. Cellular. Having never been at the Wisconsin State Fair, being the hostess justly made my first experience, the BEST.

I also truly enjoyed visiting every county/district fair. Getting to see the different sizes, setups, and history of each fair was truthfully an eye opener. My one goal for the summer was to share a story from as many fairs as possible. These stories highlighted youth members across the state of Wisconsin.

Below I've included just some of the highlights – there are too many to include them all, but I will continue to share them with anyone I meet who would like to hear about the amazing people I met, things I learned and memories that I will never forget. Thank you to everyone who made this journey an unbelievable experience that I will always cherish.



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Red: County/District Fairs **Purple:** Multiple events **Blue:** Other events



Breakfasts on the Farm: I enjoyed the three ice cream eating contests I participated in, the delicious breakfasts, and the stories told by host farm families. Keep up the great work promoting agriculture and the dairy industry!

Fairest Galas: There were a few words of advice I told all former and future fairests:

1. Always capture your moments and take an ample number of pictures, because before you know it your year is done.
2. Keep track of the miles you travel, events attended, and hours put into your role. And my favorite advice:
3. It only takes 15 seconds to introduce yourself and make a new friend. After all, we can never have too many friends.



Elroy County Fair: Give a 4-H exhibitor an abandoned animal and I can guarantee you won't have to worry about a shortage of love and care. Buddy, a Great Dane/Lab mix, had a rough first life, but is now a happy, healthy, 4-H dog on the road to recovery. All thanks to his new family.

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4th of July: Adams County, thank you for the warm welcome and American Spirit!



WFRV Channel 5: Mike and Millaine helped me highlight the upcoming fair season and the Wisconsin State Fair! Tune into their weekly farm reports to stay connected to the farming industry.



Marquette County Fair: Jacob, an outstanding first-time exhibitor, was the highlight of the fair. It was his first year showing hogs and sheep. I admired his personality and the confidence to talk to bidders at their annual auctions dinner. Keep being a great role model for future youth members.



Northern Wisconsin State Fair: Ally is a very diverse exhibitor. She enjoyed showing her Red and White Holstein steer, Moose. Ally also showed horses and received grand champion All-Around for her pony. Congratulations sweetie and keep up all your hard work!

2018 Farm Technology Days, Wood County: A fun-filled three days, featuring new technology in the agricultural industry. It is a great experience for not only farmers, but for families to also see how the farming industry has progressed. My favorite spots were the Equine Area and cooling off in the Cranberry Bog!



LaCrosse Interstate Fair: I met my special needs friend, Erik. He had no limitations when it came to fair season. Erik enjoyed showing his three hogs, 199 ride, Chris P Bacon, and Tornado. His name choices were my favorite!



Barron County Fair: Gunner exhibited Llamas all over the state of Wisconsin, as well as Kentucky, Minnesota, and Iowa. At only nine years old, he is 5th in the country for his age division! Gunner taught me how to show a Llama, as I've only showed cattle. They have four classes; Pack class, PR, Obstacle, and Showmanship.



Washington County Fair: Part two, of the Llama world, happens here! Not many 4-H programs have a wool spinning club anymore. The wool goes through a cleaning phase, it then has to be carded (smoothing), and is finally spin into yard used for crocheting and knitting.



Langlade County Fair: A fair tradition you'll see most exhibitors participating in is nap time, or downtime near their animals. Morgan loves coming to the fair to cuddle with her steer, Jack. Little Linzie's favorite part is getting to walk her steer, lightening. Well deserving of their ribbons that day!



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 1: A beautiful day started out by doing a television interview for Fox 6 News, then opening ceremonies, and gliding down the Giant Slide. The fun didn't stop there; Kaitlyn Riley, Governor Walker, and I then proceeded to enjoy SpinCity. My favorite part of the day was getting to help in the All for One Swine Show, which gave children with intellectual disabilities, the chance to work with a group of kids and their show pigs. Once learning all about their hog, they practiced for the big walk inside the show ring!

Wisconsin State Fair, Day 2: The Fair Camp Counselors and I kicked off camp by decorating shirts, sharing snacks, and dancing! Throughout the day I visited the goat show as well as the dairy show. I had time to stop in and help out WE Energies with their Power Play Pandemonium. A young lady and I had to do a “quick fix” on a power pole.



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 3: In Grand Champion Hall, the fairgoers and I made decorative flowers on-a-stick. The Sheep Show was going on throughout the day with specialty wool breeds. A major sponsor of the Wisconsin State Fair, Sentry, had a whole day of activities planned. I helped decide who had the best dance moves! We ended our day by helping out Alice in Dairyland, Kaitlyn Riley, by handing out Baker’s String Cheese to fairgoers who watched the milking demonstration.



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 4: Kicking off Sunday morning I chose the county with the most spirit at the Dairyland Youth Celebration Ceremony. Kaitlyn and I were very pleased to see the spirit of young individuals, after a long three days of showing! It was UWM Day and a time to show off your Panther ROAR! The UWM Men’s Basketball Team and I picked the best roars and handed out goodie bags. In the afternoon, I talked about my four days of the State Fair on 94.5 KTI County. I finished my day with a huge crowd to listen to me talk about our agricultural industry and how our cows get milked!



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 5: What is the State Fair without Fairests? Fairests from all over the State came to Fairest Reunion Day. We learned about our State Parks, how a Famous Cream Puff is made, ate an amazing lunch, and rode the Sky Glider across the fair. We scored some yummy goodies in the Wisconsin Products Pavilion and helped engage the crowd for Alice in Dairyland's presentation! To end Fairest Reunion Day, we had all the fairests on trams and everyone got to do the princess wave for the parade. Thank you ladies, for having me visit your county fairs and for coming to experience mine!



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 6: "Welcome to the Sesquicentennial and Century Farm Honoree Breakfast." I had the privilege to thank our Farmers and share my stories growing up, on the farm! Junion Homestead Farm, from my hometown, celebrated 150 years of family farming. This day was special beyond belief. I also, with the Wisconsin State Fair Staff, got to bring the fair spirit, to Children's Hospital. We sang, danced, played games, and ate cream puffs. My favorite moment was getting to go to bedside and sign my post cards to patients who couldn't join in on the fun. In the evening, we partook in on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Meat Products Auction.



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 7: And the day came. The day we picked the 2018 Sporkies winner! The evening kicked off with Kaitlyn and I jumping around, with Bucky the Badger, and getting people ready for a fun-filled night! The 2018 Governor's Blue Ribbon Livestock Auction, highlights the champion meat animals. Proceeds go towards the exhibitor and the Sale of Champions Foundation.



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 8: Celebrity Cream Puff eating contest. Need I say more! Though Kaitlyn and I did not win, it sure was a fun way to kick-off her birthday! Throughout the day, I visited with exhibitors throughout the barns and spoke at the House of Moo. The Draft Horse show ended the evening with a full coliseum. The Draft Horse Princess and I got to ride out of the coliseum on the winner's wagon.



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 9: Hopping from activity to activity is Kaitlyn and I's specialty. Spending the days holding baby animals was definitely our favorite. Then came the time for the Fire Guy to break a world record. The 4-H Horse projects were performing throughout the afternoon. Gymkhana and jumping events filled the coliseum.



Wisconsin State Fair, Day 10: I gave my last House of Moo presentation to an energetic crowd. Informing fairgoers about agriculture is important because we are three generations behind. Everyone needs to know how their milk is produced, how we take care of our cattle, and the system in which we run. In the afternoon, I got over my fear of holding chickens! For the evening, Kaitlyn and I got dressed up to hand out ribbons for the Wisconsin Holstein Futurity. There may have been a "Futurity Promposal!" Thank you, Kaitlyn, for being my date.



Wisconsin State Fair, day 11: I was honored to assist State Fair Park Board Chairman John Yingling in handing out the Chairman's Awards. These awards are given out to exhibitors who have great informational booths, a clean tack area, and have a great fair attitude. The Junior Amateur Talent show displayed talent from all over the state of Wisconsin. We handed out prizes to the top three participants in each division. I also was on a panel of four judges for the dog talent show!



Athens County Fair: You may see a difference in size here. The horses show in the morning, but I had the privilege to watch Bailey show her miniature pony. Miss Bailey named her pony Dusty because she says he's always dirty!



Warrens Cranberry Festival: Home to 6th, 7th, and 8th generation Wisconsin cranberry growers. I had the pleasure to finally meet the artist of my Wisconsin State Fair portrait. Charlene was one of 60 painters that day. Beautiful painting, by a wonderful lady!



Brown County Holiday Parade: My herd was “mooing” along, at story time, for the downtown Holiday Parade. Christmas on the Farm, was the perfect story to tell. Thank you, Brown County Dairy Promotions, for having me be part of your dairy good time.

The stories I’ve shared throughout my reign highlight present and future mentors, for our industry and your county fairs. They may not know they are leaders, but most leaders don’t realize the people they mentor, even when they’re not looking.

The stories, miles, and friendships made traveling to 57 county, district, and state fairs, are the best experience one can imagine.

Thank you, for welcoming this Kewaunee County girl across the State of Wisconsin!

Always make today and every day, a great day for food, family, and agriculture!