

Washington

Washington state dairy ambassador coronation set

The Washington state dairy ambassador contest will take place on June 24 in Arlington.

This program provides a professional and educational opportunity for young women. They serve as Washington's ambassadors for milk and receive a generous college scholarship, internships and extensive communications training.

"It will soon be time to say good-bye and thank you to our 2016-2017 State Dairy Ambassador Alicia Smaciarz and State Alternates Jana Plagerman and Tiana Peterson," said Tammi Schoenbachler, state ambassador adviser in a press release. "They have done a fantastic job representing the Dairy Farmers of Washington this past year and I'm sure they will continue to be lifelong advocates of our industry."

The 2017 Washington State Dairy Ambassador Coronation



Juliana LeClair



Claire Leininger



Anna Teachman

will be June 24 at the Byrnes Performing Arts Center, 18821 Crown Ridge Blvd., Arlington, Wash.

Doors open at 5 p.m. with the program beginning at 5:30. This year dinner will not be provided; instead there will be light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments served during a short intermission.

Tickets purchased after June 16 or at the door will be adults \$25, students \$15, under 6 still free.

Organizers say they are hoping these changes will make it easier for families, farmers and students to attend

For ticket information, contact Gloria Edwards by email at gloria.wsdw@hotmail.com or 360-273-7313.

This year there are three contestants.

Juliana LeClair, from Skagit County, is the daughter of Joe and Annette LeClair of Mount Vernon, Wash. She will graduate from Mount Vernon Christian School this June.

Juliana has lived her whole life on her family's dairy farm feeding calves, doing field work and other chores.

She has been a member of the Sunshine Dairy 4-H Club for 9 years and has completed 14 dairy projects, held club offices, won top showmanship awards and was selected

as a state delegate to the National 4-H Dairy Conference.

In 2015, Juliana was selected as the 2015-16 Washington State Jersey Queen Alternate.

She plans to attend Washington State University to pursue a degree in agricultural and food business economics with a minor in animal sciences.

Juliana would like to own a dairy and have it open to the public to see how their food is produced.

Claire Leininger, from Whatcom County, is the daughter of Erik and Paula Leininger of Everson, Wash. She will graduate from Nooksack Valley High School this June.

As a young girl, Claire had the opportunity help at her grandparents' farm where they raised replacement heifers. Her father also works at a

local dairy where she was able to visit frequently.

Learning from these early experiences and with a passion for dairy, Claire was able to secure a job at a local dairy. She has responsibilities that include milking, cleaning stalls, moving cows, heat detecting and herd health.

Claire plans on attending Whatcom Community College to attain her associate degree. She then plans to attend Trinity Western Washington University to study Catholic theology.

Claire would like to have her own small farm to raise replacement heifers and have a job as a Catholic youth minister.

Anna Teachman, from King and Pierce counties, is the daughter of Michael and Lorilyn Teachman of SeaTac.

She has taken classes through Global Connections High School and Valley View

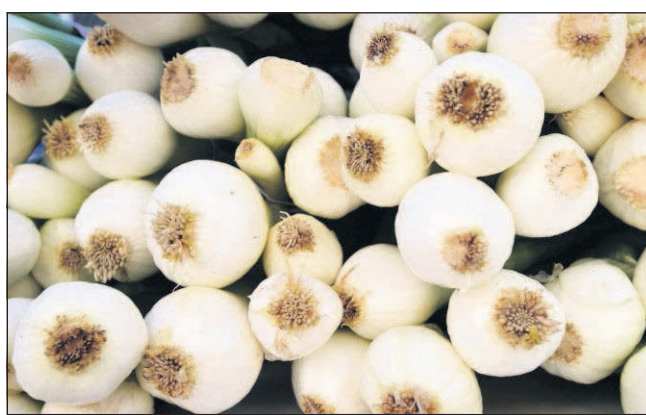
Academy, where she will graduate in June.

Anna did not grow up on a dairy, but has had a deep interest in dairy cows since she was very young.

She joined the Barn Buddies 4-H Club in 2012 and has projects in dairy, rabbits, dogs, cavies and performing arts. She has exhibited her projects at both county and state fairs, winning top awards.

Anna was selected as a state delegate to the National 4-H Dairy Conference and the National 4-H Dairy Conference Planning Committee, where she will help with planning the 2017 conference.

She plans to attend Washington State University to pursue degrees in animal sciences and strategic communications with a career goal of a communications position with a dairy company or organization.



EO Media Group File

Walla Walla sweet onion harvest began the week of June 12.

Walla Walla sweet onion harvest now underway

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Walla Walla sweet onion farmers began harvest the week of June 12.

"We had a long spring, it was kind of wet," said Michael J. Locati, chairman of the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Marketing Committee. "Things didn't really want to grow real fast, so we didn't start as early as we did last year, but this is more of a normal year for us."

Walla Walla sweets are a specialty onion protected by a federal marketing order, which designates them as a unique variety and establishes a federally protected growing area, the Walla Walla Valley of southeast Washington and northeast Oregon.

The onions are noted for their low pyruvic acid content — pyruvic acid is what makes onions pungent — and high water content, which makes for a juicy, flavorful product.

Harvest typically lasts from mid-June to mid-August.

"There should be a steady flow that entire time," Locati said.

Twenty farmers raise Walla Walla sweet onions on 500 acres, according to the marketing committee. Yields average 650 50-pound units per acre.

Fall-planted onions look good, Locati said, and he expects an easy transition into harvesting spring-planted onions.

Roughly 40 percent of the onions are usually jumbo-sized, about 3 to 4 inches in diameter, with 10 percent colossal-sized, at 4 inches in diameter or larger. The rest are medium-sized.

Locati expects an average crop, although some of the

onions may be on the smaller side.

Farmers didn't have to put up with a lot of disease and insect pressure thanks to the cold winter, Locati said.

"We didn't see nearly the amount of thrips we usually see," he said. "I think pest pressure was down. And then it didn't get real hot. ... Hopefully everything comes out OK."

Just as farmers are getting into their onion fields, the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival begins in downtown Walla Walla at 9 a.m. June 17.

Highlights include chef demonstrations, music, several dance companies and a Seattle Seahawks tour bus, said Kathy Fry-Trommald, executive director of the marketing committee.

The event is held in conjunction with the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation. She estimates the festival drew 5,000 people previously.

Walla Walla sweet onions are the Washington state vegetable, Fry-Trommald said. The festival promotes awareness of the onions and the history of the industry.

"We'll be having an onion-eating contest, and I don't know how much history those folks are going to be focusing on, but they're going to have a good time," she said with a laugh. "We usually have some pretty good people sitting up there willing to eat a raw onion."

Several growers will sell onions at the festival, Locati said.

He hopes to be able to attend the event.

"We're probably going to be in the thick of harvest," he said. "Sometimes it's tough, but there's definitely a farmer presence there. There'll be sweet onions there, for sure."

Longtime Walla Walla sweet onion marketing committee executive director ready to retire

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Kathy Fry-Trommald, executive director of the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Marketing Committee, is retiring after 17 years.

Her last day is June 29. "I feel very privileged to have been in this position to work with the industry and to promote the Walla Walla sweet onion," Fry-Trommald said. "It's been an awesome job."

Michael J. Locati, chairman of the marketing committee, said Fry-Trommald has worked to maintain the federal marketing order that protects the variety and designated geographic growing area, preventing copycat onion producers from selling their crop as Walla Walla sweets.

"(She's) really supported our efforts," he said, noting his appreciation for Fry-Trommald's dedication during her tenure.

Michael F. Locati, the uncle of Michael J. Locati, served as chairman of the marketing committee for 13 years, working with Fry-Trommald.

Fry-Trommald began as the committee's bookkeeper,



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press File

Kathy Fry-Trommald, executive director of the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Marketing Committee, pictured in May 2014, will retire June 29 after 17 years with the organization.

Michael F. Locati said.

"She took the whole industry very personally and did a very good job representing the Walla Walla sweet onions over the years," Michael F. Locati said. "She's done a real fine job. She's defended our industry from day one and worked with the growers and packers very well. It's been a very good relationship."

The position is being split. Administration of the federal marketing order will be taken over by Ag Association Management.

As executive director, Fry-Trommald also organized the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival, now in its 33rd year. The event will now be run by the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation.

"The sweet onion festival has been near and dear to my heart," Fry-Trommald said. "It's going out much bigger than it was when I came in."

The downtown foundation is best-suited to take over the festival, Michael J. Locati said.

"It really is a community event," he said.

McMorris Rodgers: Focus on results, not regulations

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

DAVENPORT, Wash. — Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers says federal agencies should focus on the outcome they want instead of regulating the process farmers use to achieve results.

"Instead of the regulatory, top-down, prescriptive approach" she wants agencies to focus on the results they want, the Eastern Washington Republican said during a listening session about the farm bill May 30 in Davenport, Wash.

Since the beginning of the year, Congress has worked to repeal many major regulations, McMorris Rodgers said.

"Unfortunately, this has been building for decades, where you've just seen more rules and regulations that have the impact of law that were never voted by elected



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers talks with farmers and others at a farm bill listening session in Davenport, Wash.

representatives of the people," she said. "We need to rethink a lot of the federal government, just go through agency by agency, program by program, and think, 'How do we get this agency or program focused on results?'"

Twelve people representing Eastern Washington agriculture shared their concerns

ranging from the overseas wheat and beef markets to grazing livestock on public land and greater sage grouse management.

Edwall, Wash., goat rancher Sue Lani Madsen spoke about moving from process-specific programs to focus on getting the desired results.

"If you really just want more sage grouse, pay farmers for having more sage grouse on their land," Madsen said. "Let the farmer figure out what works to get sage grouse on their land. I think that would be more effective and less subject to manipulation."

In response to President Donald Trump's proposed budget, McMorris Rodgers said Texas Rep. Michael Conaway, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, made it clear to her that he would not support proposals to cut funding for crop

insurance and market access programs.

Eastern Washington wheat farmers export 90 percent of the wheat they produce, McMorris Rodgers said.

"It's very important to me that the market access program and crop insurance are protected within the farm bill and budget moving forward," she said.

McMorris Rodgers urged farmers and wheat industry representatives to highlight what they're hearing from customers overseas. She'll work with others in Congress to build the necessary support, she said.

McMorris Rodgers also spoke with Conaway about the falling number problem in wheat that caught farmers off guard last fall and cost them more than \$30 million. They spoke about looking into how the new farm bill can help affected farmers, she said.

U.S. Wheat expresses concerns about import investigation

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press



Steve Mercer

A U.S. Department of Commerce investigation into steel imports could open the door for other countries to retaliate by imposing restrictions on their purchases of commodities such as wheat, U.S. Wheat Associates officials say.

"We see the possibility that if something happens from this investigation with

a commonly traded commodity like steel, then it just opens the doors to any other country who may wish to invoke national security to retaliate against the United States," Steve Mercer, vice president of communications for U.S. Wheat Associates, told the Capital Press.

"One of the possible ways to do that is with restrictions on wheat imports."

The Commerce Department announced its investigation into steel imports in April, arguing that imported steel makes up about 26 percent of the amount used in the U.S. and could become a national security concern. The department will consider overcapacity, dumping, illegal subsidies and other factors to determine whether

steel imports from other nations such as China "threaten American economic security and military preparedness," according to the department.

Findings could lead to a conclusion that protective duties on imported steel should be applied for national security reasons, according to U.S. Wheat.

The World Trade Organization allows countries to impose trade restrictions for very few reasons, in-

cluding national security. The national security exception is rarely used, outside weapons and nuclear materials because "most countries understand that doing so would open a Pandora's Box of competing national security claims," according to a U.S. Wheat press release.

"We're looking at a potential path that opens up potential concern down the road," Mercer said.

"I'm all for challenging unfair subsidies, but farmers like me know you need to use the right tool to fix a problem," Jason Scott, U.S. Wheat chairman and a wheat farmer from Easton, Md., said in a press release from the organization. "Citing national security to block imports like this would be like lighting a fire to kill a weed. It might do the job but you could destroy the whole field."