

**EASTMAN WOMAN NAMED 62ND ALICE IN DAIRYLAND;
O'BRIEN STARTS DUTIES JUNE 1**

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Electronic images are available by CALLING Nicole Breunig

BURLINGTON – Cheryl O'Brien, Eastman, was selected as Wisconsin's 62nd Alice in Dairyland tonight, following three intense days of interviews and public appearances in Racine County. She was one of six final candidates for the public relations job that carries six decades of Wisconsin agricultural tradition.

"My goal as Alice in Dairyland is to use my knowledge of the news industry to better report Wisconsin agriculture news and promote agriculture in all areas of the state," O'Brien said. "During my contract year, I would like to spend more time in the metro areas of the state, demonstrating how important agriculture is to every resident, and how if we all buy local, Wisconsin products, we can continue the strength and success of the state's \$51.5 billion agriculture industry for years to come."

O'Brien grew up showing dairy animals and working on her family's Eastman dairy farm. O'Brien served as an officer with the Crawford County Junior Holstein Association, the Eastman Cloverleaf 4-H Club, and the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Leader Council. She represented her county as Dairy Princess, educating students about the importance of the dairy industry, and has volunteered her time at the Wisconsin State Fair Moo Booth and at a local food cooperative. O'Brien graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May 2008 with degrees in journalism and mass communications. She gained experience in journalism by participating in Panthervision, the Broadcast Club at UW-Milwaukee, and Student Commitment 2008. O'Brien works for WISN-TV/DT in Milwaukee as an assignment editor. She was also a finalist for the 61st Alice in Dairyland position.

As part of the selection process she was evaluated on her public speaking, ability to answer impromptu questions, written communication skills, media interviewing, and her commitment to and involvement in agriculture. O'Brien assumes her duties June 1. During her contract year, she will receive a salary of \$40,000, professional travel expenses and a mink garment from the Kettle Moraine Mink Breeders Association. She will use a 14-karat gold and platinum brooch and a tiara with diamonds, citrines and amethysts, courtesy of the Wisconsin Jewelers Association.

"The 62nd Alice in Dairyland has an exciting opportunity and enormous responsibility as Wisconsin's agriculture ambassador. I am confident she will continue to promote Wisconsin products at school visits, media interviews, and community events to encourage people to buy locally to support local businesses, communities, and economies in our state," said Ashley Huibregtse, 61st Alice in Dairyland.

Other finalists for the position were Peggy Dierickx, **De Pere**; Krista Kasten, **Richfield**; Jodi Kauth, **Loyal**; Rebecca Paris, **Belleville**; and Melanie Welles, **Ixonia**.

The 63rd Alice in Dairyland will be selected next year in Rock County, May 20-22.

To schedule Alice in Dairyland for an event or speaking engagement, contact Nicole Breunig at 608-224-5080 or email at DATCPAlice@wisconsin.gov. For more information on Alice in Dairyland and the Alice Program, visit www.datcp.state.wi.us and click on "Marketing Agriculture."

Alice in Dairyland is a full-time public relations professional employed by the DATCP Division of Agricultural Development for a one-year term. Each year, Alice travels more than 40,000 miles throughout the state and nation, promoting Wisconsin products to audiences of all ages and types. She educates the media, youth and civic groups about the many facets of the state's agricultural industry. ###