



## News for Immediate Release

Jan. 25, 2011

### **Claire Werkiser Crowned as 2011 Pennsylvania Fair Queen**

Hails from Unionville Community Fair, Chester County

**Harrisburg** – Claire Werkiser, of West Chester, Chester County, was crowned the 2011 Pennsylvania Fair Queen this week after a three-day competition held in Hershey during the annual joint convention of the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs and Pennsylvania State Showmen’s Association.

“Pennsylvania’s agriculture industry greatly benefits from the state fair queen program which grooms ambassadors for our 114 county and community fairs,” said acting Agriculture Secretary Michael Pechart. “For 25 years, more than 5,000 young women have served as the faces for our state’s number one industry, many of whom have remained active advocates for agriculture.”

Werkiser, the daughter of Dave and Maria Werkiser, is an 18-year-old senior at Unionville High School where she is involved in National Honor Society, student council, school musicals, and is editor of the school newspaper, among other activities. She has organized numerous fundraisers and volunteers with the Brandywine Valley Association. She raises goats, chickens and horses and enjoys baking.

Werkiser, who will receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the state fair association, was crowned by outgoing Pennsylvania Fair Queen Casey Hall, of Bradford County.

Each contestant prepared a three- to five-minute speech highlighting the activities at her county or community fair and a written essay about the fair’s personal significance in her life and local community. Each queen gave a stage introduction during the fair convention annual banquet and interviewed with three judges.

The queens are evaluated on their public speaking skills and knowledge of the agricultural industry, as well as on their poise and personal presentation in an evening gown competition.

Five finalists were chosen and gave an impromptu answer on how to encourage members of their generation to become involved in agriculture and the fairs.

Nicole Wasson, 19, of State College, Centre County, was first runner-up. She is the daughter of Ronald and Candace Wasson and is a freshman at Lancaster General College of Nursing and Health Sciences. A past state alternate dairy princess, Wasson also volunteers with the Penns Valley Grange, Centre County Dairy

Promotion, the Arc of Pennsylvania, Geisinger Children's Miracle Network and the Special Olympics.

Rounding out the top five finalists were: Ashley Shaw, Gratz Fair; Emily Griswold, Perry County Fair; and Breanna Robinson, Somerset County Fair.

Robinson was also named "Miss Congeniality," an award voted on by the other contestants.

The three judges were returning judge Chris Fickes, of Perkasio, Bucks County; Becky Brashear, of Frederick, Md.; and Leslie Morton, Woodbridge, Va. The master of ceremonies was Kevin Bieber, of Oley, Berks County.

To celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fair queen program, 10 former Pennsylvania fair queens returned. They included Jill Romesberg Luster, 1987; Denise Sustrik Yoho, 1990; Jana Duttry Davidson, 2000; Julie Sollenberger Taney, 2001; Jacqueline Pratt Tuke, 2002; Kristi Rooker, 2005; Rebekah Dunn Davis, 2006; Faith Houston, 2007; Katy Mitchell, 2008; and Nicole Clemson, 2009.

Pennsylvania is home to 114 county and community fairs stretching from April through October. The fair queen travels the state representing Pennsylvania's rich agricultural heritage and serving as an ambassador for the fair association.

Visit the Department of Agriculture at [www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us) to find a list of fairs, or plan a trip to a fair using Keystone Country, the department's agritourism website at [www.visitpa.com/keystone-country](http://www.visitpa.com/keystone-country).

**Media contact:** Jean Kummer, 717-787-5085

**Editor's Note:** Visit [www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us) and click on "Media" then "Photo Gallery" and "2011 PA Fair Queen" for high-resolution photos.

###