

Julie French crowned Queen of the Furrow at annual Plowing Match

By Bill Rea

Albion resident Julie French will be representing the Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association for the coming year as Queen of the Furrow.

French was acclaimed to the title last Thursday at the association's 92nd annual plowing match, held at Wrightway Farms on Innis Lake Road.

The sash and crown were presented to her by current Queen of the Furrow Caleigh Van Kampen of Amaranth.

Van Kampen will be representing the association at the International Plowing Match, to be held in Huron County later this month.

She addressed those on hand for last week's match, commenting the experience of the last year gave her the opportunity to represent women and youth in agriculture at many events.

She also stressed the need for marketing, pointing out people appreciate the hard work farmers put in toward feeding the world, and that message has to be repeated.

Although she was the only one seeking the position, French was asked to speak about the history of agriculture in Peel and Dufferin. She referred back to the 1800s, when European settlers were looking for places to farm, and how this area offered forest, as well as rich soil.

French also reflected that about 175 acres of farmland is being lost per day, adding that would have been impossible 150 years ago. She observed there have been many advances in agriculture over the years, including the tractor, which helped reduce the need for manual labour on the farm, while speeding up and increasing production; the growth in selective breeding; and technology.

"This is an ever-advancing subject," she observed. "Agriculture is becoming a more automated process."

French also pointed out the evolution of agriculture in Peel and Dufferin has not taken place over night. She pointed to the need to appreciate the progress that has been made, and what's to come.

Van Kampen made similar references when she spoke about the changes in agriculture over the last 25 years, and what's likely to come.

She pointed to the use of social media, noting that people have been moving away from agriculture and the importance of using technology to draw them back.

"It's becoming more and more important to speak out for agriculture," she declared.



The Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association last Thursday acclaimed Albion resident Julie French as their Queen of the Furrow.



There was lots of modern equipment being used to plow the furrows, but some of the competitors looked to the past. Caledon resident Bert Speirs was using this 1925 Rumely Oil Pull Tractor made in La Porte, Indiana. It's guaranteed to burn successfully all

grades of kerosene under all conditions, at all loads up to its rated brake horse power. Photos by Bill Rea



One of the attractions at the Plowing Match was the annual Mayor's Challenge. This year's competition was won by Erin Mayor Allan Ails.



Caleigh Van Kampen placed the sash and crown on her successor as Queen of the Furrow, Julie French.



Horses can still pull a plow, and that's what Steve Bickley from Bobcaygeon was demonstrating as his wife Laurie watched. He was being pulled by Percherons Torry and Khloe.



Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association President John Davis and Queen of the Furrow Caleigh Van Kampen thanked members of the Wright family for hosting last Thursday's Plowing Match.