

Plowmen crown new Queen of the Furrow

By Bill Rea

Amaranth resident Caleigh Van Kampen is the new Queen of the Furrow for Peel and Dufferin.

She won the crown last Thursday at the annual Peel-Dufferin Plowing Match, hosted by the Dixon family at the farm on Creditview Road in Caledon.

She prevailed in a two-way contest with fellow Amaranth resident Kelsey Banks, and was crowned by outgoing Queen Natalie Vink of Caledon.

The two women had to undergo interviews and deliver speeches as part of the competition. They also had to demonstrate their plowing skills.

In her address, Van Kampen asked the audience what they think of when they hear 'agriculture,' observing that a lot of people don't realize what goes on behind the scenes.

Van Kampen is going into her third year studying agriculture at the University of Guelph, and she said she has a passion for telling people about where their food comes from.

She commented that only about 52 per cent of Canadians know a little bit about where their food comes from.

'I'm still shocked and disappointed by this fact,' she declared, pointing out there's still a knowledge gap, despite such things as social media. She also lamented how companies use the media to make consumers listen, and how farmers get frustrated trying to get their message out.

Van Kampen also pointed out less than two per cent of consumers have a direct link to a farm.

She said her sister goes to schools educating children about dairy farming, and has related stories about a kindergarten student who was shocked to learn that 'ice cream comes from cows!'

Van Kampen said the conversation to change that is going to have to involve everyone.

'Imagine the impact that could have,' she said, 'one conversation at a time.'

In her remarks, Banks asked people to think about 'game changers,' or when something big happens. She said her definition is when someone or something makes an impact.

She stressed that women are game changers in the agricultural industry. In the past, they were just supporters, but she said women have changed the game over the years.

'This has helped women soar above and beyond the box they were once stuck in,' she remarked.

Banks said she works in the agricultural business and on a farm. She added there were obstacles facing her, but she refused to let those obstacles or challenges define her. 'I want to be a game changer.'

She commented that a lot of people in the agriculture business study at Guelph, but she went to Algonquin College to take marketing and communication management.

She also said a man once told her she would only succeed with a pretty face, but she didn't believe it. She said it was hard work that got her where she is.

She also stressed she is not the only game changer, citing several examples of women who have made a difference.

Vink expressed her appreciation for the opportunities she's had over the last year to represent the Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association at numerous events.

'It's inspired me in so many ways,' she declared.



Natalie Vink crowned her successor Caleigh Van Kampen as new Queen of the Furrow for Peel and Dufferin.



Queen of the Furrow contestant Kelsey Banks was demonstrating her plowing skills, under the eye of Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association President Harry Brander.



The Plowing Match attracted representation from outside the Region. Halton's new Queen of the Furrow Kailey Donaldson from Acton was accompanied by her father Doug.



Mayor Allan Thompson was hosting the Mayor's Invitational at the Plowing Match, and he also won it.



It wasn't just tractors pulling the plows. Doug Lambie from Elmvale was driving Belgians Leon and Maude.



The Dixon family hosted last Thursday's Plowing Match.