

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
KENT A. LEONHARDT



304-558-3550

agriculture.wv.gov



Facebook: West Virginia Department of Agriculture



Twitter: @WVDeptofAg

New Release

August 10, 2017

Contact: Crescent Gallagher

Communications Director

304/558-3708; 304/380-3922 (cell)

cgallagher@wvda.us

SIX STUDENTS TO SERVE AS HONORARY COMMISSIONERS OF AGRICULTURE

Charleston, WV - Six students, ranging in age from 9-16, will serve as Honorary Commissioners of Agriculture for the Day during the State Fair of West Virginia, August 10-19. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) sponsored the contest with the theme "Local Food: Why It Matters." Each student entered an essay, video or photo presentation explaining the importance of locally grown food and how it impacts the state's economy, environment and health.

"We wanted to provide a firsthand experience for students across the state to see what careers in agriculture look like. No better way to do that than to shadow my staff and myself during one of our busiest times of the year," stressed West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "We hope these students take away a new appreciation for our food system after this experience."

The winners will spend the day with Commissioner Leonhardt and the WVDA staff. They'll sit in on meetings and events, take a behind-the-scenes tour of the fair and will be featured in the September issue of the *Market Bulletin*.

The 2017 Honorary Commissioners of Agriculture for a Day contest winners are:

Sophie Slack - Hurricane Middle School, *Putnam County*

13-years-old Sophie loves to garden. She grows vegetables as well as flowers and aloe and loves to share her harvest with others. She attends the West Virginia University Extension Service Camp.

Maeva Robinson - Rainelle Elementary, *Greenbrier County*

Maeva, 9, knows what it means to put in a hard day's work. She spends a few days a week after school working in the Rainelle Elementary high tunnel. Her parents built her a greenhouse at home to extend the planting season. She spends her summers working at the farmers' market. Maeva says, "Locally grown food matters because it builds the community and supports a clean environment."

Elizabeth Ours - Petersburg High School, *Grant County*

Elizabeth loves animals. The 16-years-old is a member of FFA and shows livestock at the Grant County Fair. She is a past winner of the Regional Creed and Public Speaking Contests for FFA. Her Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) with FFA includes: pigs, strawberries, an aquaponics project and working in greenhouses.

Emily Yates - East Hardy High School, *Hardy County*

At just 15-years-old, Emily Yates is a seasoned pro on the farm. She raises bulls, heifers, hogs, sheep and goats, which she will be selling at this year's State Fair. Emily also grows corn, strawberries, and green beans on the farm.

Julianna Rexroad - Braxton County High School, *Braxton County*

In 2016, 13-year-old Julianna participated in the 4-H heifer project. She showed her registered Limousin heifer at Junior Nationals. Julianna likes working with her grandpa on his 300-acre farm.

Devin Price - Weir High School, *Hancock County*

14-year-old Devin has grown up on two family farms, one in Doddridge County, the other in the Eastern Panhandle. Devin's favorite thing on the farm are tractors and has been researching them since he was little. Devin grows beans, tomatoes, and peppers in his garden. Devin says, "Local food provides good, sustainable jobs for many members of the community."

For more information about the WVDA Honorary Agriculture Commissioner for a Day contest, contact WVDA Communications Director Crescent Gallagher at 304-558-3708 or cgallagher@wvda.us.

###