

## News Release

# Hanna Ruckheim - Agriculture Enthusiast with a Passion for Teaching Others

By Amber Johnson on Wednesday, April 1, 2020

What do wise words from a high school agriculture education teacher, growing up with an agriculture background, and attending the University of Minnesota Crookston all have in common? For Hanna Ruckheim, it was the combination of these three things that inspired her to become an ag education teacher.

The senior from Parkers Prairie, Minn., has always had a passion for agriculture and teaching others. She grew up milking dairy cows on the family farm until they were sold when she was in 3rd grade. From there, her family switched to raising beef cattle and she started her own herd. Just as she did with the dairy cattle, Ruckheim enjoyed showing beef cattle in 4-H and FFA. Currently, she owns her own Simmental herd of 6 cows and 3 heifers.

Ruckheim is an agriculture education major and an animal science minor. Prior to attending the University of Minnesota Crookston, Ruckheim competed in ANRAD with her high school FFA chapter, and toured the school.

"I think it was these experiences that allowed me to become more familiar with the campus, and that really drew me in when it came to deciding where to attend," explained Ruckheim.

The decision to become an agriculture education major wasn't Ruckheims initial choice. Coming into her freshman year, she was an animal science major. Her decision to switch to ag education began when she started to see teacher qualities in herself, and she became more interested in the education classes than the chemistry classes.

"When I graduated high school my agriculture education teacher said she always knew I would end up in ag education. I remember at the time that I laughed at that thought," remarked Ruckheim.

Favorite classes within her major include her food science classes, her animal science classes, and the leadership aspects that come with the education major classes.

"I've really enjoyed being at a college where all of the professors know the students names and care about them. It's hard to walk down the halls and not see someone you know or hear someone saying hello, and that community feel means a lot to me," explained Ruckheim.

Ruckheim is involved in numerous clubs and organizations on campus. She is a member of the Animal Science Association, the Ag-Arama club, NACTA, and the Dairy club. Some of her many accomplishments in these clubs includes winning the NACTA dairy judging contest in 2018 and placing second in 2019.

In May of 2019, Ruckheim took part in the study abroad trip to Brazil. The trip was three weeks long and it consisted of primarily animal science and horticulture majors. While there, the group visited farms and operations that were involved with agriculture such as three dairy farms, a feedlot, and a coffee farm. They also visited two universities and took part in cheese and honey making classes.

"Visiting the dairy farms was a really interesting experience. Each farm was a different size in terms of number of cows and production with the biggest being 600 cows. One of the farms even used an irrigation system on their cows to keep them cool," explained Ruckheim.

On campus, Ruckheim has a work study which allows her to work in the barns with supervisor Mandy Gundavagen. Her duties include feeding the cows, sheep, and goats, monitoring the health of the animals, cleaning barns, operating the skid steer, and working to maintain order in the barns.

"I've loved working for Mandy Gundvagen over the years. I actually volunteered to work for free just for fun my freshman year as I didn't have work study but still wanted to be involved," remarked Ruckheim.

Ruckheim will graduate in December, and she will begin student teaching in Alexandria in January. Once that is complete, Ruckheim plans to find a career teaching ag or working in 4-H extension. She would like to stay Minn., and in the New York Mills area. She plans to continue expanding her cow herd and hopes to one day have kids that will be involved in showing cattle.

Along with student teaching, other future plans for Ruckheim include her wedding this upcoming summer. Ruckheim met her fiancé, Logan Milligan, through 4-H, and both are graduates of the University of Minnesota Crookston.

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