



Cornell University

**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Monroe County**

2449 Saint Paul Blvd
Rochester, NY 14617
p. 585.753.2550 f. 585.753.2560
e. monroe@cornell.edu
monroe.cce.cornell.edu

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For more information, contact:

The name a reporter should contact

585.753.2567

Email address:

**Monroe County 4-H Dairy Program
Building Life Skills**

Monroe County 4-H Youth Development members participating in the dairy project have been in a flurry of activity this spring and summer. The youth have tried new experiences, achieved success, been positive role models, and had fun with their friends from across New York State, as well as the country.

Owen, Hope, and Faith Avedisian, all from Hilton, NY, participated in the Finger Lakes District Dairy Bowl event in the spring. It was their first time participating in this quiz bowl style game where all of the questions are about dairy cattle, their care, feeding, management, and more. They had a chance to meet youth from nearby counties and to form teams with them. In the Junior Division, Owen received a 9th place finish individually and was a member of the 5th place team. In the Senior Division, Faith and Hope were part of the 4th place team.

The 4-Hers kicked off their show season at the Spring Dairy Preview in June. They showed their Jersey and Ayrshire heifers, bringing home a number of ribbons. They also exhibited in the Allegany Steuben All Breeds Show, the Allegany County Fair, and the Steuben County Fair. At these events, the cattle are evaluated on their structural correctness for attributes such as a level topline, and strong feet and legs. Dairy character including flatness of bone and pliability of skin is also considered in the show ring. The Avedisian family garnered a number of ribbons with their animals. Highlights include Faith's 3-year-old Ayrshire cow being granted Honorable Mention at the Spring Dairy Preview. This cow was also Reserve Sr. Champion at Allegany Steuben, and Grand Champion at the Steuben County Fair. Hope's Jersey Fall Yearling placed 1st in nearly all of her classes over the summer and was named Jr. Supreme Champion at the Steuben County Fair.

These exhibitions also provided the opportunity for youth to participate in dairy judging. This event allows youth to hone their critical thinking and communication skills as they apply the knowledge they are gaining about dairy cattle. Faith was a

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member of the 1st place dairy judging team at the Spring Preview and the Allegany Fair. Owen and Faith both placed in the top ten individually at the Allegany Fair, and Faith was 2nd place recipient at the Steuben County Fair.

The Monroe County Dairy Princess program was revived in 2019. Faith and Hope joined the program and are both Alternate Dairy Princesses. This commitment finds them promoting dairy products at schools and community festivals. They also have the honor of introducing youth to a newborn calf at some of their activities.

In early July, the National Ayrshire & Brown Swiss Convention was held in Buffalo, NY. Faith and Hope were active in planning the event, serving on a number of committees. They were also very active at the Convention. Both were Leadsman for National Sale animals, and Hope participated in New York's Junior Dairy Bowl Team. They were also able to tour Brown Swiss and Ayrshire Farm in Western New York, and to fit in a visit to Niagara Falls and Letchworth Park.

In the midst of summer fairs, Faith gave a final presentation and graduated from the Junior Dairy Leader program at Empire Farm Days. The program is coordinated by Debbie Grusenmeyer at [Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#). The program prepares teens for successful careers in the dairy industry. Next year two Monroe County youth have been selected to participate in the Beginning Dairy Leader program. Hope Avedisian and Sebastian Hariram will begin their experience in November to learn more about the dairy industry.

As summer began to wind down, a visit to the State Fair for the Avedisian family and their beautiful animals was on the schedule. Hope and Faith both earned beautiful purple ribbons as Master Jersey Showman in their age division. This is a high honor amongst state-level peers and their animals. Showmanship is based on the skill of the youth presenting their animal to highlight its best assets. It also takes into consideration the care and cleanliness of the animals and the knowledge of the exhibitors.

The 4-H Dairy Project participants in Monroe County are busy building important life skills. Whether it is the teamwork involved in caring for a group of cattle at a show, or the communication skills while interacting with the public, it is a pleasure to see youth who are committed to a project area and who set goals for their future participation.

The Monroe County 4-H Program is offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension to the youth of Monroe County. 4-H is a worldwide youth development program open to all youth aged 5 to 19, who want to have fun, learn new skills, and explore the world. In return, youth who participate in 4-H find a supportive environment and opportunities for hands-on or "experiential" learning about things that interest them.

Learn more at <http://monroe.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth-development>.

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