

News source: Penny Lauritzen, lauritzen@farmestate.com

News writer: Katie Zelechowski, kathrynzelechowski@yahoo.com

Eighth-annual Women Changing the Face of Agriculture conference ends in success

URBANA, Ill. — The eighth-annual Women Changing the Face of Agriculture conference took place on March 10 on the Urbana-Champaign campus of the University of Illinois. The conference provided young women opportunities to network and explore careers in the agriculture industry.

More than 300 professionals, volunteers, and college students shared their agriculture experiences with the young women in attendance. Through a networking career fair, over 550 students were able to receive information on career opportunities, agriculture courses, student-to-student advice, and much more.

Keynote speaker Elzandi Oosthuizen, vice president of global geographic strategy for Monsanto, shared her journey as a woman breaking gender stereotypes in the agricultural industry.

Oosthuizen said, “The question we all have to ask ourselves is ‘can I have it all?’” In answering that question, Oosthuizen encouraged her audience to “do things your way, not the way that previous generations did it.”

She encouraged the students and professionals in the audience to use agriculture as an opportunity to impact, influence, and reach further than their immediate surroundings.

The conference also featured 27 breakout sessions ranging from college preparation and agriculture careers to presentations featuring engineering innovations and cattle reproduction research. Companies such as John Deere, Syngenta, Monsanto, and Growmark were represented, along with many other organizations and colleges.

After an inspiring day looking into the future of agriculture, students left with the knowledge they will need to succeed as women in agriculture.

Liz Harfst, Normal Community High School agriculture advisor, said that she brings her students to WCFA because “it broadens their horizons and breaks them out of their shell to meet professionals within the industry.”

For more information about the conference, visit womenchangingthefaceofagriculture.com. Follow the conference on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for agriculture news, scholarship and career opportunities, and future conference information. The next Women Changing the Face of Agriculture conference will be held on March 9, 2018 at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus. Details and information will be available soon.

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