



SILAS de LANGE

WCC JUNIOR WRITING COMPETITION WINNER

My name is Silas de Lange, a member of Team Alberta. I have attended the Western Canadian Classic twice and plan to attend as many more times as I can. My first year was last year, 2022 in Brandon Manitoba and it was a week that I will never forget! From the 14 hour bus ride to the hard work of setting up stall to the countless hours spent watching stall, the clipping competition and wrapping up with winning Reserve Grand Champion Showmanship. It was one of the best weeks of my life!

Although WCC is lots of fun it's also lots of work. The week is full of competitions and events such as Judging, Dairy Science and my two favorite competitions Clipping and Showmanship. I have been lucky to placed in both of these competitions both of my years at WCC. The thing I look forward to the most through the week is seeing how Team Alberta will place in the premier province competition. The reason I look forward to this the most is because that's when you find out if all of your hard work had paid off, for example last year our team won premier province and it felt so good knowing that all of the hard work we had put into judging, clipping, stall competition, dairy science quiz and showmanship had paid off!



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WCC takes a lot of preparation for the teams. We have workshops and planning meetings every year before WCC to prepare. We start with a meeting at the Provincial Dairy show to discuss who is planning to attend and who will be preparing what for the stall competition decorations and signs. A couple of weeks before WCC we have a prep day at someone's farm. On prep day we go through all of the team's stall equipment and figure out what we have to bring to WCC, we also make props and design the stall and paint the stall decorations. As well as getting the stall ready we also get ourselves ready by doing judging workshops, a showmanship workshop and we go over clipping preparations and we study to prepare for the dairy science quiz. This year for the stall competition I got to design the stall cards for Team Alberta and it was a lot of fun but it was also very frustrating. Designing something that matches the WCC theme, something that everyone on the team likes, something that is easy to read on the background. It was hard to listen to everyone's feedback and come up with an end product, but this also helps to learn to work as a team. All this planning and preparation pays off when we get to WCC and get everything set up. . . When the stall looks gorgeous and when team Alberta is doing great, nothing feels better.

Though exciting, show day is the most stressful part of the week. Show day is very stressful because everything is happening so fast! One minute you're waking up early to wash the calves and the next you're walking into the showring. The team is busy clipping, getting calves ready to go in the ring, trying to time the right moment to be dressed in your whites to stay clean but be ready. Keeping the calves in the bedding pack clean. And keeping them eating so they look good for the show. Though stressful it's also very exciting being able to walk into that ring with the calf you've worked so hard with, to have them trained perfectly.

For me all of my hard work paid off in my first year at WCC, when I won reserve Grand Champion Showmanship. It was so exciting. Standing in the ring, everyone clapping, the judge announcing that he's gonna go out and pick his Grand and Reserve Champion. Then he walks up to you and gives you that high five. It's the best feeling I've ever felt. It was so amazing. One of the things that made this moment so amazing is that the first time I ever tied up my calf 'Dance' she jumped over a gate and a water fountain, to say she was crazy was an understatement. But after working with her for countless hours throughout the year and training her what felt like forever. It finally paid off.



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This experience has taught me to never give up on your calf no matter how crazy she might be. Another great part of WCC is meeting and getting to know new people. Because of the WCC I have friends from across all the Western provinces. I have met and built friendships with people from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, B.C and of course Alberta. Through WCC I met my two best friends. This is a great example of the benefits of being a part of the Western Canadian Classic and what it really is all about. Not only is WCC a great way to learn about our Canadian Dairy industry it also helps people to get to know each other and build relationships with people with the same passion and this is why I love the Western Canadian Classic dairy show.

This show and these experiences would not be possible without our Platinum sponsor Westgen. So thank you to Westgen for sponsoring the Western Canadian Classic dairy show and without you guys at Westgen this would not be possible. So far WCC has been a great experience for me and I hope to make many more memories at WCC in the future.

Silas de Lange | JUNIOR
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