



Say cheese: Bridgette Owston with baby Jersey calf Cinderella on her parents' farm. Inset: Bridgette with little brother Jake, mum Belinda, dad Wayne and Rose the cow, who will be auctioned to raise awareness of autism. Pictures: Daniel Wilkins

REGINA TITELIUS

DAIRY farmers Belinda and Wayne Owston have had a long-standing romance with the Perth Royal Show. They met at the Show in 2005, and when they married four years later, the maid of honour was a prize-winning Jersey cow, alongside a handsome Red Poll bull as the best man.

And now, with two young children, Jake, almost 3, and Bridgette, 5, the Owstons are making their annual trip to the Show to hopefully collect a few more ribbons for their stud beef and dairy cattle property at Whitby, near Mundijong. Among the animals on exhibition will be heifer Rose, from their Broselinda Park Holstein stud line. Rose will be auctioned at a special stud sale

in March to raise awareness for Autism West. With both of their kids recently diagnosed as autistic, the Owstons are keen to inform people about the condition. "Before last year, we didn't know anything about autism," Mr Owston said. "This is our way of raising awareness, particularly in country areas." Mr Owston said although farm life could sometimes be a

challenging environment for their children, particularly Jake who had no sense of fear, it also offered many rewards. Autism West chief executive Alison Davis said: "Young people on the autism spectrum, whether they're in regional or metro areas, need support to develop their social skills. "The initiative the Owston family is taking with auction-

ing Rose, and to raise their kids on their farm, is a great example of what people in our community can do to raise awareness and offer wonderful opportunities to the lives of kids on the autism spectrum." Mr Owston is speaking in November at the Autism West Symposium. The Royal Show starts on Saturday. autismwest.org.au

Two 'first ladies' set to meet

SAMANTHA MAIDEN

MICHELLE Obama will hold talks with Lucy Turnbull in New York this week. The US President's wife, who made her first official appearance on the US campaign trail for Hillary Clinton overnight, has emerged as one of the Democrats' biggest weapons in the political race. Both she and the Australian Prime Minister's wife are former high-flying lawyers and philanthropists who are expected to discuss their charity work. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull will address the United Nations and hold talks with President Obama. Mr and Mrs Turnbull will also visit the 9/11 memorial in New York. Mrs Obama has emerged as a heavyweight political player in the campaign to win the White House. Yesterday, she unloaded on Republican candidate Donald Trump in a speech in Fairfax, Virginia. "If a candidate is erratic and threatening; if a candidate traffics in prejudice, fears and lies on the trail; if a candidate has no clear plans to implement their goals; if they disrespect their fellow citizens, including folks who made extraordinary sacrifices for our country; let me tell you, that is who they are," she said. "A candidate doesn't suddenly change once they get into the office."

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