

Homestead Notes

Pat Ervey, Editor



Faye Greenberg, Ag Student

Can The City Keep This Girl?

By Sally Bair
Feature Writer

Milking cows, driving tractors and feeding calves come naturally to most Lebanon County farm girls, but for Faye Greenberg of New York City it's a whole new world, and one in which she seems to thrive.

Seventeen-year-old Faye lives in Jamaica in the borough of Queens, and is spending the summer living on the 222 acre dairy farm of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Sattazahn, Lebanon RD2.

But Faye is no ordinary visitor - she is there to learn all about the farm as part of her high school curriculum. Although it is obvious she'd rather ask questions than answer them, she agreed to talk about just how a girl from New York City wound up on a farm in northern Lebanon County.

Faye will be a senior at John Bowne High School in Flushing which, according to Faye, has the only agricultural program in New York City. The course is designed to augment the regular academic curriculum and help the students acquire knowledge in forestry, gardening, large and small animals and other areas of agriculture. There are about 400

students enrolled in the program, and Faye says, "It's getting bigger and gaining more interest all the time."

Faye got into the ag program because she said, "I'd like to be a veterinarian and I always found it interesting. It amounts to an extra major with students taking two periods of agriculture a day, and then having three summers of practical experience." Faye says the summer experience is particularly good "because you get to see different possibilities for jobs."

During their first summer in the program, the students work at the high school where they are given a 15x15 foot plot of land to do "whatever we want." Faye said, "We learned how to prepare a seedbed and how to fertilize properly. I grew corn, beets, carrots, radishes and string beans." That first summer, she learned to drive a tractor, including how to back up with a manure spreader. "We really learned the basics, and it helped prepare us for the practical summer experience," Faye said.

There's about four acres of land around the school to be used in the ag program, and while most animals require too much space, they did raise chickens.

Faye recalls, "I learned how to kill and dress a chicken, but I wouldn't want to do it."

For their second two summers in the program, each student is required to have some kind of related on-the-job training. The experiences range from actual farm work, as in Faye's case, to helping in veterinarian clinics, to working in botanical gardens. One student is a milk inspector. Last year Faye worked on a thoroughbred horse farm near Media.

Usually each student is visited twice during the summer by someone in the agricultural department, but Faye says since she's so far away she'll probably get only one visit. She says the purpose is "to make sure you're working and discuss how much you know." If you don't know something they think you should, they ask you to do an extra report.

Faye said, "The summer program is an important part of our education because you really get experience. Being on the farm is the way you learn most, and find out if you're good with animals." She feels her summer experiences will be valuable when she applies for vet school, because "they want you to have experience with large animals."

She said, "Being on the farm helps show what farmers have to do. They have to know everything." Faye is learning what crops are necessary for a dairy farm, how to prepare fields for planting and what is involved in harvesting. She is also learning "what cows are like - I never came in contact with one before. I watched a calf being born and learned how to give a cow a shot."

A very important part of the program is keeping a daily record of what she does and learns. There is an ever-present notebook which Faye carries to jot down things as she observes them. Each evening is spent copying the day's events into a diary which will be turned in and graded when she returns to high school. Her diary is also filled with pamphlets and brochures which she has acquired to help increase her knowledge.

The Sattazahns have three daughters: Juliette, 17; Phyllis, 15; and Barbara, 12. They also have a foster parent from Cedar Haven living with them, and just so things don't get dull, they are hosting an exchangee from Germany, Ulrich Geissler, who is here under the auspices of the Future Farmers of America.

With so many workers this summer, they are enjoying the luxury of being able to take turns helping with the milking. But



Faye shows that she has, indeed, taught her red and white Holstein, Sable, to lead properly for the Lebanon Fair.

when it's Faye's turn, about every other day, she gets up at 4:00 a.m. with the rest of the family and assists with milking the 74 Holsteins. Faye helps feed the heifers silage and grain, and feeds calf-starter to the calves which have been weaned. She said, "I really enjoy that." She also puts bedding into the calves and gives them hay.

After that, it's time for breakfast and usually the family rests before continuing the day's work. Faye mentions some of her morning chores: "I help sweep up and clean calves, scrape up the pole barn and lead the bulls into the barn to eat and sometimes clean out the bulls." She proudly adds, "I learned how to scrape up with the uni-loader."

The rest of the day is filled with various farm chores. The Sattazahn girls have 4-H animals, so often they work on them. Faye has been given a senior calf, "Sable," which is hers for the summer to get ready to show at the Lebanon Fair. Faye says, "My calf is a red and white Holstein and it never had a halter on. I've been breaking her in, and she's leading pretty good now." Faye is looking forward to the fair, saying "I think it's going to be a really terrific experience!"

Faye says she learned how to rake - "a little bit," but of her tractor driving she says, "I'm not an expert."

There are plenty of other farm chores in the summer and Faye does whatever needs to be done. She helps unload hay bales and stack them in the barn, feeds hay to the dry cows and heifers and helps pick string beans and with other gardening. Then, of course, evening milking time rolls around, and the morning chores must all be repeated.

About Faye's ability to work,

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Learning to scrape with the uni-loader was a happy accomplishment for Faye.



Keeping close records of what she has learned and does each day is very important for Faye. Here she copies from her notebook into her diary which will be graded at the completion of her summer experience.