



Lebanon County . . .

## Ruth Miller 1974 Dairy Princess Has Variety of Interests

by Sally Bair  
Farm Feature Writer

Ruth Miller speaks quietly at first, but as she begins talking about her life and her hopes as Dairy Princess, she becomes animated and talks out with force and conviction.

She is just beginning her reign as the 1974 Lebanon County Dairy Princess and still shows her surprise at actually winning the title by saying, "I wasn't expecting it - I was so stunned."

Nevertheless, she has some definite ideas about the work of a Dairy Princess. "I think I can get to people who don't know much about the dairy industry, and talk to them about dairying and milk products. Civic groups would be a good place to start."

One thing she hopes to do is correct some misconceptions about dairy products. "Some people think milk is fattening. Older people often think they don't need milk anymore, but they should drink it to keep their bones from getting brittle."

Since Ruth says she loves to drink milk and eat homemade ice cream, she'll probably never have to worry about having brittle bones!

Of the many gifts she received as Dairy Princess, one of the more important is travel expenses to the annual training session for all dairy princesses held at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Ruth says she's looking forward to getting to know the other girls there. "I also think that's a way to find out how other counties are promoting the industry and we might get some good ideas to use in our own counties."

Ruth says, "I'm a little leery of the state contest. I wonder what questions they'll ask."

Of the local contest she says, "I was a nervous wreck in front of the judges." However, it didn't show when she was interviewed on stage. One of the questions she answered concerned the future of the dairy industry. She said, "I think it's a great life's work for someone who has some knowledge of the industry and some money. But they must be willing to stick through the rough times."

Ruth is a licensed Practical Nurse, having graduated from Eastern Lebanon County High School and from the LPN program at the Lebanon County Vo-Tech School. She has been working at the Evangelical Congregational Church Retirement Village in Myerstown for 2½ years. She says, "I really like my work. It's not depressing to me because I figure these people gave their lives to make the world better for me, so I can take my turn to care for them." She particularly enjoys sitting down and talking with the elderly when she has time. She says it's interesting to hear how



Gardening was one of Ruth's 4-H projects, and she still helps with the work at home.



Helping with the feeding is something Ruth knows well. The cow doesn't seem to care that she

is a Dairy Princess now.

things used to be.

With her optimistic outlook, she must be quite an asset to the Retirement Village. She says she did cause a stir when she arrived for work after winning the contest wearing her button which reads, "Milk drinkers make better lovers."

Ruth completed her eleventh year of 4-H work last year, so this is her first year as a leader for the Elco Town and Country 4-H Club. It's a community club, and Ruth's responsibility is teen leadership and knitting. She also helps with the bicycling project.

She says there is a great interest in bicycling among the younger members. "They want to learn the law with regards to bicycles, and they have spoken with the police about establishing bicycle routes," she relates.

When she was in the club, Ruth's projects were sewing, rabbits, gardening, dairy, teen leadership and knitting.

Ruth's father, Roy F. Miller, is herdsman for his father, Hubert S. Miller. They are farming about 150 acres on three farms and have about 55 milking Holsteins.

Ruth has only one small calf in her name now, but she has sold several milking animals, the profit from which has gone into a savings account for her.

She enjoys showing, and still helps her father show groups classes at shows and helps to get animals ready. She is philosophical about the hard work of preparing animals for show, saying, "it's part of it". She admits that she got dragged pretty often when she was first trying to teach her animals to lead for showing.

Ruth says she only helps with the milking "when Dad's away at fairs, but I do feed heifers in the winter. I help with the gardening, from preparing the soil to planting to picking and canning."

One reason Ruth has not had to help with the milking is that she has three older brothers - Gary, 25, a Penn State graduate in aeronautical engineering; Calvin, 23, just returned from the Army and planning to enter Penn State in the fall; and Roger, 22, a technician for Northeastern Breeders Association.

But she does know how to work in the fields. One of her jobs frequently is to help unload hay, and she says they made a "family affair" of picking up stones from their fields this spring.

As we talked about what she does in her spare time, Ruth began showing afghans, scarves, shawls, baby booties and needlepoint work which she has created. She is a leader of a sewing circle of women in the community who get together to work at their crafts. Ruth is currently working on a cross stitch embroidery quilt top, which she says she's looking



Knitting, crocheting and needlepoint all come as second nature to Ruth now, but she learned all she knows from books.

forward to quilting. Her hope chest must be quite full!

Just to be sure her hands are never idle, she also makes most of her own clothes and does sewing for a cousin who wears the same size.

About her hand crafts Ruth says, "I learned it all from books. I thought I wanted to do it and so I got books and learned. I've been doing it since I was in junior high." At this point her mother came into the room, and she said she has no talent in crocheting, knitting, etc., but her pride in Ruth's accomplishments was evident.

Ruth is also a member of the Myerstown United Church of Christ.

This was Ruth's second year in the contest. She said she entered two years ago, and since this was her last year of eligibility decided to try again.

It paid off, because the two years of maturing made her a winner, and they are sure to be an asset as she begins her year of representing Lebanon County's dairy industry.