



## Tina Marie Acker . . .

# Chester County's Enthusiastic Dairy Princess

by: Sally Bair  
Farm Feature Writer

Tina Marie Acker is a pretty, enthusiastic teenager who is just beginning her reign as Chester County's first Dairy Princess in eight years.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Acker, Chester Springs RD1, Tina is one farm girl who believes in keeping fit, not just by drinking lots of milk and milking cows, but by working hard on her hobbies of gymnastics and figure skating.

During the winter the days can get pretty hectic for the 16-year-old. She attends Downingtown Area High School where she will be a senior, then arrives home to spend three hours helping to milk her father's 190 head of Holsteins and then is off to three hours of teaching gymnastics and practicing.

Tina has an arrangement whereby she teaches gymnastics in exchange for taking lessons herself. Consequently, she spends Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and part of Saturday working with groups of four or five children on all the gymnastic equipment. In the summer she doesn't work quite as hard, with classes just one day a week, but just so she doesn't get out of shape, she works out often on the balance beam that has been installed on a grassy area at her home, and she said she "tumbles on the grass".

Also in the summer she figure skates (to help keep her figure!), and goes once a week for lessons and once for practice. The one thing her hectic schedule does is "makes me skip a lot of meals". She said she often finds herself eating supper at 10:00 at night after finishing all her classes.

Not surprisingly, Tina hopes to attend West Chester State College and major in physical education, although she says her real dream is to be a professional ice skater.

In high school, Tina is taking a combination of business and academic courses, and is a member of the leader's club, which means that she aides the physical education teacher. She works with grades ten, eleven and twelve, and said she takes roll in the classes and demonstrates the use of equipment, particularly gymnastic equipment.

Tina exudes the radiant good looks of a healthy farm girl, and as she talks about her life on the farm you can tell that it not only agrees with her physically, but has had a big influence on shaping her down-to-earth, outgoing personality.

About country life she says, "I sure do enjoy it. You're never cooped up and can always be outside." She said she goes to school mostly with town residents, and sometimes they like to tease her about being a farm girl. "But," she says, "I learned to give it right back. They used to call me 'milkmaid'."



Tina works with a junior calf which is being sold as a project animal to a 4-Her.

She added that most friends like it that she lives in the country. One friend, in fact, is staying with the Ackers this summer and helps with the morning milking and other work.

Tina says, "I learned a lot living on a farm, and number one is respect - respect for everyone. Sometimes it's frustrating when I want to go away and there's work to be done, but the work still has to be done."

As Dairy Princess she says, "I would like to get out and speak to people my own age. I would tell them their future is really dependent on them. I'd like to compare the health and nutrition of milk with that of Coke."

She admits she might be a little hesitant to speak in her own school where she knows everyone, but she said, "Put me up in front of a group of strangers and I'll speak freely."

She says she would also like to clear up some of the false impressions the general public seems to have about farmers, including the current idea that farmers are getting lots of money from the high cost of food. "I would like to get people to stop looking down on milk, and to get them to buy it and drink it."

She added that she would welcome invitations to speak to civic organizations.

Tina says she "can't wait for the state Dairy Princess contest," and thinks the training program for all the dairy princesses "will be a lot of fun." She adds that she will do her best to win the state contest for Chester County.

One of the questions to which Tina responded at the local contest was the question of women working outside the home. She said emphatically then that she feels women belong in the home caring for their families. However, she tempered that statement in the interview by saying, "I think women should prepare themselves for a career. People do not always look ahead, and are sometimes not prepared for tragedy when it happens. Women should be prepared to support their families if it should become necessary."

When asked about the future of dairying, Tina replied, "I sometimes think dairying is going downhill, but I think if we all stick together we can boost it up."

Some of the qualities a young man needs if he is entering dairying, Tina says, are "a good will to work, good muscles, money to back him up and a kind heart."

She blushed and replied "yes" when asked if she would marry a dairy farmer. "A couple of years ago I didn't think I would," she admitted, "but now I see the light and I think I would." She added with a laugh, "Even if I had to get up in the morning and milk."

Tina has been a 4-H'er for six years and currently owns four animals she will be showing this summer. She said she also helps show her father's animals. She said, "I love showing - I can't wait for the show season." She helps with preparing the animals for show, and said most are broken for leading, but she helps clip, wash and lead the animals so

they're in tip-top shape for show day.

Tina entered the Miss Chester County Junior Miss contest this summer and has gone through one preliminary session of interviews and talent. She's now waiting to hear if she was chosen one of the 15 finalists. Her talent was, naturally, a three-minute gymnastic routine.

Tina says she's allergic to hay, which gets her off the hook as far as haymaking is concerned. However, she helps with the milking every evening, and sometimes helps in the morning "when the hired help doesn't show up".

She often helps with the cooking, and says she sometimes has to cook breakfast for everyone, including the hired help. Her mother says she's a good cook.

Her favorite dairy food is milk - cold from the refrigerator

[Continued on Page 28]



Demonstrating her skill on a balance beam, Tina does a split.



Tina proudly holds up nature's perfect food and as soon as the picture was taken she quickly drank it down.