

Homestead Notes



Susan Seidel

Berk's County's New Dairy Princess

by Sally Bair
Farm Feature Writer

Getting an interview with the 1974 Berks County Dairy Princess is about as difficult as talking with the President of the United States. Susan Seidel is not inaccessible, but she sure is busy.

She just returned from a trip to Manhattan, Kansas where she attended the American Institute of Cooperation, then was off for three days to the state-sponsored seminar for all dairy princesses at Indiana, Pa., and then returned to help carry out her job as co-chairman of the Berks County 4-H Round-Up.

After showing cows this week at the Kutztown Fair, life should go back to some semblance of normalcy for eighteen-year-old Susan. Susan is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond S. Seidel whose 118 acre Kerchenhill Holstein farm is just on the edge of Richland. She has an older brother Doug, 20, and a sister Helen, 12.

Being busy seems to agree with Susan, however, and she is hoping to continue having a lot to do as she promotes the dairy industry in Berks County.

Having just returned from the dairy princess seminar, Susan is pretty excited about some of the opportunities for dairy princesses. She said, "My main goal as Dairy Princess is going to be to get to the consumer. I hope to be able to go into elementary schools and talk with young people. I think they will go home and tell their mothers they heard a Dairy Princess in school, and so I will be getting to the mothers through the kids."

She added that she hopes to correct some misconceptions about milk, including the one that milk is fattening. "The important thing," Susan says, "is that milk contains everything you need." She added, "I'm conscious of calories myself, and for people who think they should eat sherbet instead of ice cream, the fact is that one half cup of ice cream contains 130 calories and the same amount of sherbet contains 120 calories."

The seminar helped the princesses learn "how to get the point across," according to Susan, and it was stressed how important it is for the girls to "go out and do something," and not sit around and wait for someone to come to them.

In addition to learning poise and lots of facts about the dairy industry, the girls also learned about the anatomy of a cow. They had to prepare and present a five minute presentation on milk and were interviewed on television. The whole seminar was geared to making the dairy princesses more relaxed as they meet the public, and more qualified to represent the industry well. Susan said, "It was really worthwhile."



Susan shows off the pride of her own show string - Kerchenhill Champion.

As for the state contest in September, Susan says, "It's going to be a lot of fun, because we really got to know the other contestants."

And, very importantly for Susan, the contest will not interfere with her showing her dairy cows at the All-America Dairy Show which runs concurrently with the contest. Showing cows is very high on Susan's list of important things - in fact, it means so much to her that she considers it one of her hobbies.

Susan has been a 4-H'er for nine years as a member of the Stouchsburg Cooking Club and the Stouchsburg Dairy Club. She is a teen leader in both clubs, and has served as president and secretary-treasurer of the dairy club.

She owns 12 dairy cows, ranging from intermediate calves to aged cows, and ten of the twelve she has bred herself. She gets great joy from showing her animals, and is proud that since 1969 she has been eligible every year to show in the junior dairy show in Harrisburg. Also, one of her cows, Kerchenhill Champion Penny, was honorable mention junior All-American three year old in 1970-71.

Susan was a finalist in the Distinguished Junior Member contest sponsored by the Pennsylvania Holstein Association, and participated as a junior member in the national conventions held at Detroit in 1973 and in Atlantic City in 1974.

Last summer Susan was a member of the Berks County 4-H Dairy judging team and placed high enough in the state contest to win a trip to the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, Canada.

Also last year, Susan was named champion showman at the Kutztown Fair, an honor she is quite proud of. She said, "I really look forward to showing each year, but showing cows is hard work." Part of showing cows, of course, is fitting them properly, and Susan works hard at washing, brushing and all the other fine points of fitting. She was champion fitter one year at Kutztown, too.

She also knows where milk comes from - each morning she arises at 6:00 a.m. and helps with the morning milking before going to her job. When she is home, she also helps with the evening milking. The Seidels milk 35 Registered Holsteins. On her full days at home, Thursdays and Sundays, she also cleans up in the wash house and cleans the barn.

As for field work, Susan says she knows how to drive tractor and can work in the fields "in a pinch," but she "would rather milk cows."

Susan is proud of living on a farm and says the best part about it is the "openness. You also really get to know what work is." She said her friends never kid her about being a farm girl, "because they love to come here."

A 1974 graduate of Eastern Lebanon County High School, Susan majored in the academic course. She presented the farewell address at commencement, and said she "reminisced about our years in high school, and looked into tomorrow."

While in high school, she was president of Tri-Hi-Y, a girls' club which was in charge of homecoming and the Valentine pageant. She was also senior editor of the yearbook and manager of the hockey team. And for a little variety, she served her senior year as statistician for the varsity football team. Her job she said, was to keep offensive line records, yards gained, etc., and her statistics were used when the team reviewed the game.

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The Dairy Princess takes a break - with a glass of milk and a piece of freshly baked shoofly pie.



Susan shows some of the many trophies she has won over the years in 4-H. In the background is Miss Ivanhoe Scranton a well known member of the Kerchenhill herd.