

## Homestead Notes

# 4-H leader is dairy farm partner

By SUSAN KAUFFMAN  
Feature Writer

During the month of June, many Pennsylvania 4-H and FFA members travel to Penn State to enter the dairy judging contests. They are encouraged, taught and tested by many advisers and club leaders in preparation for these contests. Among these local leaders is Jane Pepple of Oxford, Chester County. For the last six years, Mrs. Pepple has helped to coach the Chester County 4-H dairy judging teams. Her dedication to instructing these young judges is a result and a continuing example of her interest in quality dairy cattle, first uncovered by her own 4-H experience when she was fourteen.

Mrs. Pepple unhesitatingly attributes her knowledge of dairy cattle and the unfolding of her skills in judging to the county agent and extension leaders in Blair County, Jim Pound and Tom Kelley, who allowed her to go along to the 4-H practice judging sessions as an observer and not as a participant.

During these judging sessions the 4-H members individually mark their score cards and place the animals in each class or age group according to best or first place through last. After the judging is completed, the participants are asked to give written or oral reasons for placing the animals as they did. Many technical and exacting aspects of the animal's bone structure, size, shape and udder placement are judged and definitely desirable qualities apply to all these facets of the animal's appearance which directly relate to the animal's production potential and general health. This judging process is very complicated and complex and requires a considerable interest in these finer details to excel in it.

Having been permitted to attend these practice sessions to judge the animals and not have to be accountable for her decisions gave Mrs. Pepple the opportunity to learn and build confidence. She first went with the teams when she was fourteen and made the judging team when she was 16. She also adds that part of her enthusiasm for mastering the complexities of dairy judging was a result of having three older cousins close by who made up a judging team. Good confidence - building experience and a lot of practice resulted for Jane in a continuing interest in quality dairy cattle.

Jane Pepple grew up on what she described as a "general dairy farm with a few sheep and chickens, too." On this family farm in Sinking Valley, about forty-five minutes west of Penn State, she undertook many 4-H projects. Explaining that the distance from her home to the school prohibited easy involvement in activities there, she naturally became very active in the well-coordinated 4-H programs offered in her area.

Among her projects besides dairy cattle were beef, pigs, capons, general gardening, tomatoes and homemaking projects such as sewing and foods.

Mrs. Pepple quickly gives her 4-H experience and farm background the credit for much of her understanding and interest in the registered Holstein dairy operation she and her husband, Robert, have engaged in the last four years. Prior to moving to their present home, they had worked for three and one-half years with Robert's father at Ox-View Farms, Inc. Deciding to farm on their own, they ominously began operating their present farm on Friday, October 13, 1972. Superstition has not affected their venture though.

Residing at Pep-L- Lea Farm, Oxford R1, Bob and Jane Pepple have 70 registered milking cows, raise their own



Jane Pepple relaxes a moment with one of her

Holstein calves. A friendly cat also vies for attention.

replacements, and farm 150 acres of corn and hay. In addition to raising their own heifers, they also raise bull calves from their best cows who are artificially inseminated with top bulls for Ox-View Farms which breeds naturally.

Jane and Bob operate the farm themselves except for some custom field work and parttime summer help from an Oxford High School senior Patty Devoe. Their day begins at 5 a.m. when Jane and Bob start the milking. Jane continues to milk in the double-four herringbone parlor while Bob tends to feeding and scraping. After breakfast they both work in the fields or around the buildings, depending on the time of year and the jobs that need to be done.

Mrs. Pepple says she always was a tomboy and enjoyed the out-of-doors and dairy cattle. She especially enjoys working up ground in the spring. When asked if she felt comfortable with large machinery, she replied she didn't mind baling or unloading chuck wagons at all. But if anything breaks, she has to wait for Bob to fix it. "I don't know much about the machinery itself, but I don't mind operating it," she added.

If someone calls on Mrs. Pepple after 4 p.m. that person will find her in the milking parlor. While she is there those several hours a day, she is not simply operating machinery. She knows how cows work! Although she admits that she is "just not a cut-throat and hates to sell a cow who seems to have potential but doesn't produce well," she shares her husband's goal to develop a better, not bigger, herd of animals. Knowing very well the finer points of dairy cattle size and shape, she keeps a close eye on the dairiness and type as well.

At present, their herd classifies with several Very Good cattle but no Excellent ones. Bob and Jane's ambition is to breed their own Excellent cow someday. This day may not be far away, judging from the pedigree of the two-month old calf Jane showed this reporter. She is an Elevation daughter born to an Apollo with an excellent mammary system who recently produced 1,000 pounds of fat. If some of you readers don't comprehend the full merit of this friendly looking calf, ask your husband and he will explain why Bob has called her his "million dollar baby." Jane added, "She's probably the most valuable item on the farm!"

Besides sharing her energy and enthusiasm with her husband's enterprise and her leadership efforts with the Chester County Judging Team, Jane has also served as a leader in the Oxford 4-H Home Economics Club and is a member of the Oxford Homemakers' Club. This last group is a social and service oriented club which meets once a

month for an afternoon of conversation, crafts education.

Jane remarks she is not "an artsy person" who sets out craft shops and booklets but thoroughly enjoys projects the homemakers undertake. Most of the crafts are simple in technique and can be completed in one or two afternoons.

By way of serving the community, the group sends cards and flowers to the sick in the area and at a February meeting the members bring gifts for the Cleft Palate Clinic in Lancaster. Mrs. Pepple explained that several meetings a year are devoted to guest speakers ranging from the Cleft Palate Clinic to a foreign exchange student who is staying with a family in the Oxford area. Mrs. Pepple echoes the feelings of many farm wives who attend women's organizations of various types when she remarks, "It is really a nice afternoon away, when you can forget everything but the people and conversation at the moment."

Among Mrs. Pepple's interests are sewing and cooking. She had practical training in these two fields in her high school projects and graduated from Penn State University in 1969 with a degree in Individual and Family Studies, previously called Home Economics Education. It was at Penn State that she met Bob who graduated in 1968.

Having moved from the dry summers and snow winters of Sinking Valley to the humid summers of southern Chester County, Mrs. Pepple also sees a great difference in population density. "Twenty years from now we probably won't be farming here," she comments. "But we will be farming somewhere!" Wedged in between Route 10 and the new Route 1 by-pass just north of Oxford, Jane says Philadelphia is creeping up Route 1 and Downingtown and Coatesville are pushing their way south of Route 30. Land development and taxes may eventually force the Pepples out of their present location, but as Mrs. Pepple explains, "We are producing a necessary product there is a real need for milk — cheese and ice cream consumption rises every year. We'll be farming somewhere else, but we will be farming."

When asked if she has a favorite dairy product recipe she immediately replied that she has a dessert recipe which has been a favorite for several years. The recipe one time appeared on the box of instant pudding mix and she uses it often when having dinner guests because it is very easy to prepare, takes little preparation time and is a dessert that is very tasty to most of her guests. The instructions for Dessert Lemon Cheese Pie follows:

### Dessert Lemon Cheese Pie

9 inch graham cracker crust  
8 oz. package of cream cheese  
3 oz. package of lemon-flavored instant pudding  
2 cups of whole milk

Soften the cream cheese and beat a little milk until very smooth. Add the pudding mix and more milk. Beat until smooth. Continue to add the rest of the milk beat until it starts to set as for a pudding. Pour into cold pie shell and refrigerate before serving. Mrs. Pepple suggests sprinkling a few of the pie crust crumbs over top to give a nice appearance to the dessert.

Young couples who are conscientious in their dairy work and take part in community activities are always sought out by various organizations. The Robert Pepple have been involved with the Chester County Extension a number of years through Jane's leadership in the Oxford 4-H Home Ec. Club, the dairy judging team work and Bob's three-year term on the Extension board. This winter Bob spent many hours contacting dairymen in several neighboring counties in his committee work with the Holstein Association in getting ready for the National Holstein Sale to be held early in July in Lancaster County.

If you go calling on Mrs. Jane Pepple this summer you will more than likely find her driving a tractor or keeping a close watch on the cows as she milks them. No matter where you find her you will be greeted by a very pleasant soft-spoken young woman who enjoys dairy animal work in the out-of-doors.

## Country Corner

# Proud to be a farmer's daughter

By MELISSA PIPER

Growing up on a farm lends itself to experiencing many "adventures" and as I am sure you realize by now, I have had my share! Chasing after steers, pampering pet pigs, begging for a pony and working in the fields have all been a part of my life and will remain always as good memories.

Working with the agricultural community while growing up, in college and at LANCASTER FARMING, I have come to realize that the people who still represent the backbone of our country are the farmers who sacrifice so much to help other people continue to live. Although mentioned many times before, it bears repeating that food does not grow

on grocery shelves but is produced by long hours of labor in fields and barns, miles away from the clean artificial surroundings of a city supermarket. Farmers could have been satisfied with producing only enough food for themselves and 25 other people but over the years have doubled that figure and will continue to increase production because food is essential. It is this dedication and responsiveness that makes me proud that "I'm a farmer's daughter."

As this is my last week at LANCASTER FARMING, I thank all those people in the southeastern Pa. area who have helped to make my job a pleasant and informative one.