

Sandy Lentz enjoys farm promotion

By SALLY BAIR
Feature Writer

"It's the best life," Mrs. Robert R. Lentz said with conviction as she spoke of her life on a dairy farm. But she explained that she didn't always feel that way.

When she was growing up on a farm in Fredericksburg with her four sisters and one brother, the sisters all agreed that they would not marry farmers. Sandy said, "We all worked hard - milking, baling and working the combine." Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Shirk.

But she and two of her sisters did marry farmers and she says, "I really enjoy it. You work hard, but in the winter it is not quite so demanding. It is a good place for kids to grow up."

Sandy has been a member of the Lebanon County Dairy Princess Committee for three years and despite her relief that it is over for another year she says, "I think promotion is good - definitely. It's really needed - consumers don't realize what it takes to make a gallon of milk or a pound of meat. Many consumers think farmers have an easy life."

She related a story about a visit to the Pennsylvania State Farm Show where she overheard someone asking the price of a huge piece of equipment. When the man heard the high price he said, "Farmers must really have money to be able to buy that kind of equipment." Sandy said with a laugh, "People think if a farmer needs a new tractor he just buys one." No one thinks of the debts, she said.

She explained about Lebanon County's dairy promotion along with their Dairy Princess contest. It was held at the Lebanon Valley Mall, and on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday there were exhibits in the mall, climaxing with the contest itself on Saturday evening.

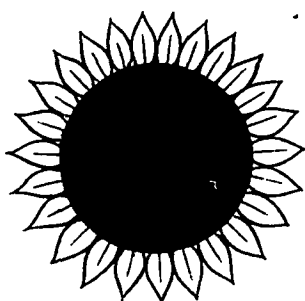
Young Farmers, 4-H'ers, and dairy suppliers made the exhibits which showed dairy equipment, what cows eat, the different parts of the cow, how to prepare cows for showing and other dairy-related information. To attract attention the Dairy Council used their life-sized model, "Geraldine," and there was a live cow and two calves there each day. A cow milking contest for young children also resulted in a lot of "pinching and pulling," Sandy said.

Sandy's husband farms 440 acres with his two brothers Jay and Gary. They have 90 milk cows which they put through a double-six herringbone milking parlor, and 130 head of young cattle.

Sandy calls herself the "substitute milker," and says that now she helps to milk only when the others are busy.



Keeping the weeds out of the flowers is sometimes a big job. Here Sandy tries to keep ahead.



She said, "This is the time of year when I do the most milking." When she and her husband first started in the dairy business they both did the milking, and Sandy recalls that she milked in the morning before going to her job as secretary for Quaker Alloy.

She said she doesn't work in the fields very much, but she does know a lot about the farm operation because she keeps "all of the records." She said she feels it's good for the wife to be involved in the farming operation in this way.

"I enjoy working with books. There's a lot more to it than I thought it would be. I'm not always caught up, but I take care of all the accounts," she says.

She said she prepares the papers for registration for the Holsteins and added, "We strive for a full registered herd, although it may take a while." The herd is on Dairy Herd Improvement testing, and the latest average was 15,738 pounds of milk, 3.7 percent, 576 fat. The Lentz's also participate in classification with their registered cattle. Their prefix is San-Bo Holsteins.

Homestead Notes

The Lentz's now live on Bob's grandfather's farm which Elmer Gibbel purchased in 1921. His father Ray purchased it from the Gibbels in 1959.

Sandy is a full-time homemaker and mother who cares for three children. Brenda is 12 and a member of the 4-H dairy club. She helps with feeding the calves and heifers and helps in the barn during the milking. She will go to Northern Lebanon Junior High in the fall.

David is four and a half and "helps with everything," his mother says. Indeed, during the interview he asked if it was time to go bring in the cows. Karen is 21 months old, and likes "cows and tractors." Sandy says even at this tender age she is completely a tomboy.

Sandy has "a rather large garden" and does a lot of canning and freezing. She said, "I plant almost any kind of vegetable. Every other year we make chow-chow." She

[Continued on Page 51]



Young David gets a glass of milk from his mother.



In the few quiet moments that come her way, Sandy enjoys doing her embroidery.

My Thoughts and Welcome to Them

(With apologies to James Thurber)

By JOANNE SPAHR

There will be no humor today. I declare a moratorium on funny material. Of course, there's always the possibility that you haven't realized I've been striving for lightheartedness in this column. Then, again, there's the other possibility that nobody's been reading this column in the first place. But, for those who have and are reading, I'd like to change my style for a little.

And, farm wives can make a big difference in farming, I believe. I don't mean the typical situation where somebody has to drive tractor, or pitch in with the milking on the spur of the moment. I mean, make a difference by getting active and supporting agricultural groups, especially the ag groups designed for women. You can do so much that your husband can't because of time limitations on him.

Of course, I'm aware that being a farmer's wife is not a simple task. I know because I'm a farmer's daughter and have seen how really overly busy my mother has been at times just doing her part to help keep the farm going. But, I've also seen her get more actively involved in farming in the past few years and know that the little bit she has done has made a difference. And it's made an important contribution to her life, also.

Several of the articles this week are centered around women active in farm organizations, and one of these women said to me, "I think women who weren't raised on a farm make better farm wives than farmers' daughters do — because they don't know what they're getting into."

That may be true enough, but there are many cases in which it isn't. It is really the type of woman who marries the farmer that makes all the difference.

Groups like Agri-Women, Agriculture Council of America, and Farmer's Union to name a few are all working, first, to promote agriculture itself, and, second, to promote understanding between the farmer and the consumer. Any time the agricultural sector and the non-agricultural sector of the country communicate with each other, there is bound to be better cooperation between the two. We need this, and we need more active farm women to be spokesmen for our often misunderstood part of the economy.

xxx

Now that I've given my pitch for getting active in farm organizations, I'd like to give my pitch for getting active in helping me with LANCASTER FARMING. I want to make the woman's section as interesting to you as possible. I know what I'd like to see in it, but I'm not all that sure if my ideas go along with yours. For that reason, I would welcome any suggestions on articles or series of articles that you would like printed in the paper.

I am presently beginning a craft column. My meager start is in the following section. As I state in the forward to that article, I would appreciate any craft or hobby which you might have that you think would be interesting to other women. Don't be shy — if you like a craft, you can be pretty sure someone else will also.

To go even further than this, I would welcome any other suggestions which you might offer. It's your paper and I am willing to at least try to accommodate your wishes. "Try" of course, has to be emphasized, since many times ideas are good, but too time consuming or difficult to carry out. But, as I said, I want to honor any suggestion you might make, and then, hopefully, act on it.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon