

4-H benefited

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His judging experience goes back four years to when he judged at Penn State 4-H days on the junior team. Then, as a senior member, he judged twice. And, now that his team has won in state competition, he is kept busy traveling and judging over much of the eastern and midwestern United States. Just last week, the team returned from Richmond, Va., where they competed with eight other state groups. Other important contests coming up are the Eastern Nationals in Timonium, Md., the Keystone International Livestock Exposition in Harrisburg, and national competition in Louisville, Ky.

"The judging team is also a great experience because you develop a closeness to other people by working beside them for a month and a half," Kevin mentioned.

The month and a half referred to is the time it takes to choose a team for Penn State. During that trial period, senior members give as many as 35 sets of reasons. From the resulting scores, the Penn State team is chosen, and everyone then works and pulls together to be the top place team at states.

So, it is easy to see how friendships are built up in this kind of situation. But, Kevin points out that you don't have to be on a judging team to make close friends in 4-H. Comradship is a natural by-product of being a member of any club.

"In a club, you work together on committees and you help each other out at shows, and you learn to talk to and to get to know other people," he explained.

This is another asset that Kevin would expound on if it were up to him to convince a skeptical person to join 4-H.

"I'd tell anybody who didn't know if they wanted to join a club about how you learn to talk to people," he said. From the common interest that each member naturally has in the club's project, conversations can take off in any direction. Shows are also a great place to get to know other people. Competing against one another and helping each



A member of the Red Rose Beef and Sheep Club since he was nine years old, Kevin has both the beef and sheep projects. Here, he poses with his steer, a Simmental-Hereford cross.

other out with animals establishes relationships.

"Oh, sure, the competition does get tight, sometimes, but you still remain friends," Kevin noted when quizzed on the subject of competition in the organization.

To clarify his point, and affirm his position on the subject, Kevin rephrased one of the 4-H mottoes.

"It's important to learn to be a modest winner and a gracious loser," he pointed out.

Continuing his train of thought, he said, "In the beef club, I've gained showing experience, but I'm not mad that I didn't always win."

To add to the list of benefits he has gleaned from his 4-H experience, Kevin pointed out the friends he now has and will continue to have in the future. Another "plus" that can't be ignored is the ability to travel that 4-H gives the active youth. Kevin's latest jaunt to Virginia an example of that.

Given a chance to change one thing in 4-H, what would Kevin choose?

"If I could, I'd probably change the rules so you could be in longer," he states with a grin. But, he good naturedly steps back from that statement right away by pointing out that the time does come when everyone has to break away from the

organization to make room for others to experience it.

Now that his last year has

come, he has already started on his plans for the future.

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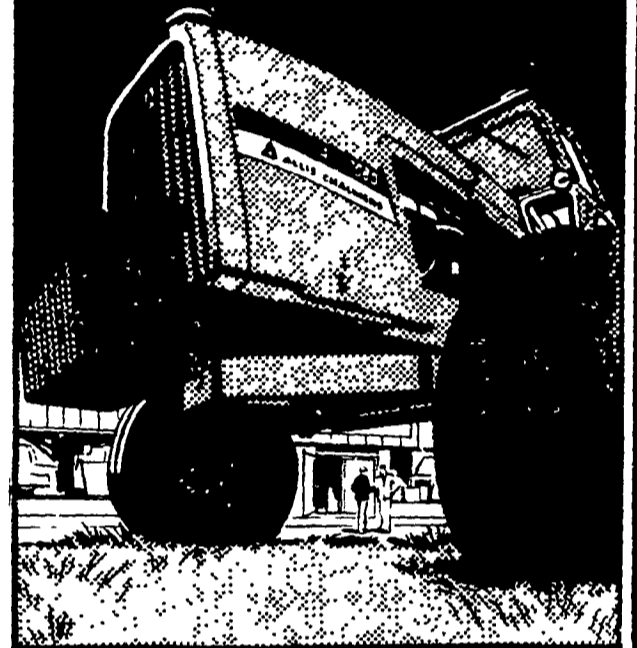


Through livestock judging, Kevin became interested in raising swine. He now has a 70 sow farrowing operation.

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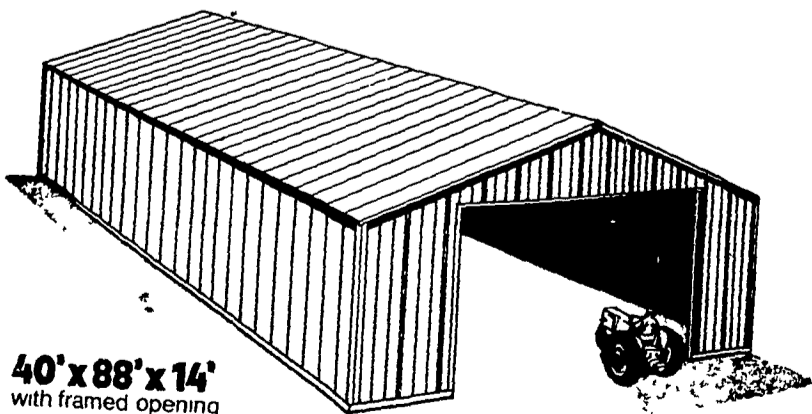
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