

In consumer education

# Delaware girl wins national 4-H scholarship

DOVER, Del. — She's not what you'd call an average consumer, being only 15 years old and a high school sophomore, and living in Seaford with her parents and sisters, Karen Taylor is not responsible for any major family purchasing decisions.

But ask her anything about making major, or, for that matter, minor, purchases and she'll tell more than most adult consumers will ever know about getting the most for their money.

This underage, above-average consumer has been busy comparing prices on groceries, fabrics, canning

supplies and crafts, to name a few items, for the past two years in the interest of her Seaford Blue Jays 4-H Club. Her diligence won her the State 4-H award in consumer education this year.

A 4-H member for more than six years, Karen recently was further recognized for her project work in the area of consumer education at the 56th National 4-H Congress held the week of November 28 in Chicago. She was named one of the six national winners in the 4-H Consumer Education Program and awarded a \$1000 college scholarship

from the program sponsor Montgomery Ward & Co.

"I started out last year by comparing prices on the same items in different grocery stores in town once a month," says Karen. "Then the next year, I compared national brands with store brands on common food items such as coffee, sugar, flour and meat. I found that a family of five can save up to \$30 a month by buying store brands."

By combining several of her 4-H projects with consumerism, Karen was able to compile quite an impressive list of consumer-related information.

Last year, she conducted a food preservation project by canning her own vegetables. While she was at it, however, she comparison shopped for the items necessary for her project—jars, lids, vinegar, spices and fresh vegetables (which she didn't buy because she used her family's garden produce). As a further price comparison, Karen determined the amount of money she saved by preserving her own produce instead of buying canned vegetables.

This year Karen made a four-piece suit as a 4-H clothing project. But rather than turning in just the one project, she itemized the fabrics and sewing notions—such as zippers, thread and buttons—comparison shopped for them and recorded her findings. When she was finished she located a similarly made outfit in a local clothing store and determined that she had saved at least \$25 by making it herself.

"My mother is really the one who got me interested in

saving money," says Karen. "A few years ago, my father was sick and couldn't work for a whole year. My mother taught me how to stretch our money then."

In addition to learning how to "shop the sales," for groceries and clothing, Karen learned from her mother that prices on baking items such as sugar go up during the holiday season and that it's best to buy them ahead of time. Her mother also showed her how to alter sewing patterns, so that the same one could be used for several different styles, and

that even the smallest bit of leftover material could serve a useful purpose.

For another of her combination projects, Karen made soft pretzels at a state food demonstration and compared costs between making and buying this popular snack. She showed consumers that they could make 18 pretzels for 73 cents, a savings of \$4.67 compared to prices at a food booth.

Karen had heard so much about the Great Depression that she decided it would make a good consumer project to compare the 1930's

with the 1970's. The Sussex county 4-H'er interviewed two persons who were young married women then—one from an urban and one from a rural area—and two women in the same living situations today. She wrote a speech about her findings and gave it to several county and community organizations.

"I found that in the 1930's, the country people had most of their own resources and were not hit as hard by the Depression as the city people," she says. "But in the 1970's, the country people

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As part of her 4-H consumer education project, Karen Taylor checked quality as well as prices on grocery items from different stores in her town.

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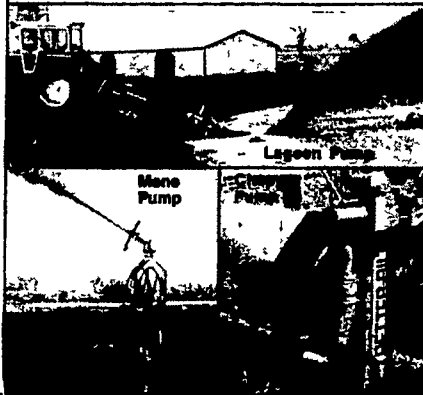
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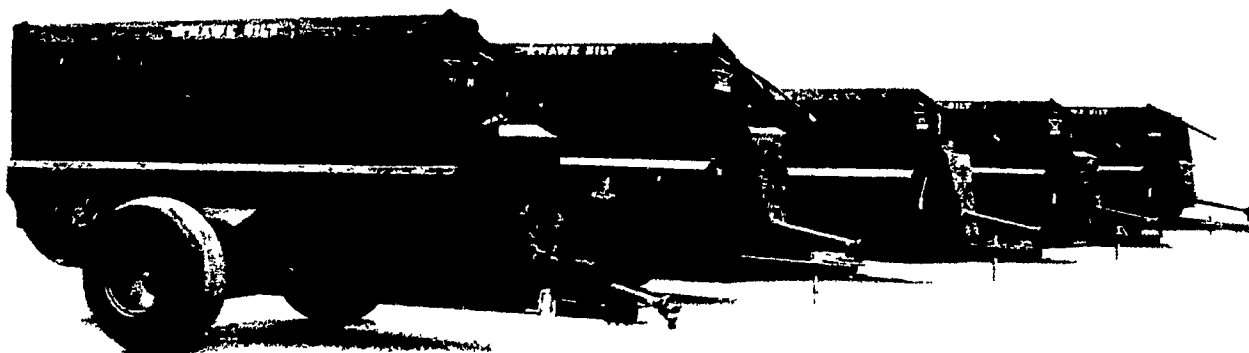
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