

Showing Holsteins is a joy for Arlen Keener

By DIETER KRIEG

RHEEMS — If it weren't for the Robert Kauffman family, 16-year old Arlen Keener may never have become interested in Holstein dairy cattle and the show circuit. Placing a show halter on one of the two animals he was preparing for the Pennsylvania Farm Show. Keener announced he wanted to first of all publically thank the Kauffmans for the opportunities they have given him.

Young Keener positioned the halter and began to brush his heifer's head for a picture. "The Kauffmans gave me my first heifer a couple of years ago," Keener began, "they've really been good to me." Although that first heifer died just a day before it was due to go to one of the major shows in the area, the enthusiastic young dairyman is building a herd. He has three Holsteins — none of them milking yet — but two thirds of them are show circuit stock.

Keener's heifer stood well for the pictures despite the blinding flash. She appeared ready for the excitement and distractions of the arena in Harrisburg. Keener removed the halter, turned off the barn lights, and we headed back to the comfort of the Kauffmans' kitchen.

"My parents farmed

for about 25 years and sold out seven years ago," the young man explained as we stepped into the dark night. "I've kept close to farms anyway — working for several farmers in the area, including the man who bought the home farm" he continued.

Keener's relationship with the Kauffmans and Holsteins began shortly after his family moved within walking distance of the Kauffman farm. The Kauffmans' son, Steve, and Keener became friends, and before long the transplanted farm boy was spending much time in his adopted family's home, barn, and fields.

Although he has no set work schedule with the Kauffmans, he helps out when needed and as his schedule permits. This past Tuesday he helped clip the family's show string, including three of his own.

Showing top quality Holsteins is something of a tradition for the Kauffmans, whose championship ribbons and trophies would easily number into dozens. The winning formula is being shared with Keener, as he is making a mark for himself among young Holstein enthusiasts in Lancaster County and neighboring areas.

"Arlen is very interested in Holsteins and their pedigrees," offered Mrs. Kauffman from the far side of the table. Keener confirmed the comment by revealing his plans for the future. "I'd like to be a herdsman on a dairy farm and have the opportunity to keep a couple Holsteins of my own," he said. He's presently a member of the county, state and national junior Holstein associations, the Lancaster County 4-H club, and the Elizabethtown FFA Chapter.

Keener regards his present showing experiences as being valuable stepping stones to the future he has in mind. Also, he believes that show ring honors will help him merchandise his own animals once that time comes. Beyond that, he likes the fun of meeting people and learning how to fit dairy animals properly.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Keener, Elizabethtown R3, the young man believes halter training and leading an animal are the most difficult tasks of show preparation. But these same duties can also be the most enjoyable once the animal's confidence is won, he adds.

Both of Keener's Farm Show entries for 1978 have won All-Pennsylvania honorable mention distinction. The younger of the two is a junior yearling out of the Robert Young herd, Elizabethtown R3. The other is a 2-year old purchased from Tom Scheaffer at Carlisle.

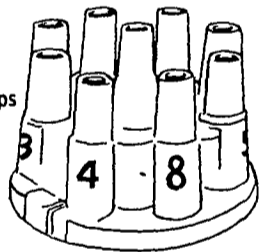
This week, Keener tried for the ribbons which the Kauffmans have inspired him to win. He came away with two second place ribbons and a fourth, competing both in the youth division and against the seasoned veterans.



Arlen Keener, Elizabethtown R3, is studying the art of showmanship and fitting at the home of one of the most outstanding show strings in Pennsylvania -- Penn-Springs Farm at Elizabethtown.

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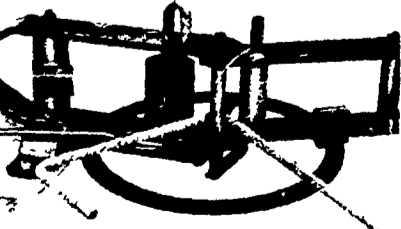
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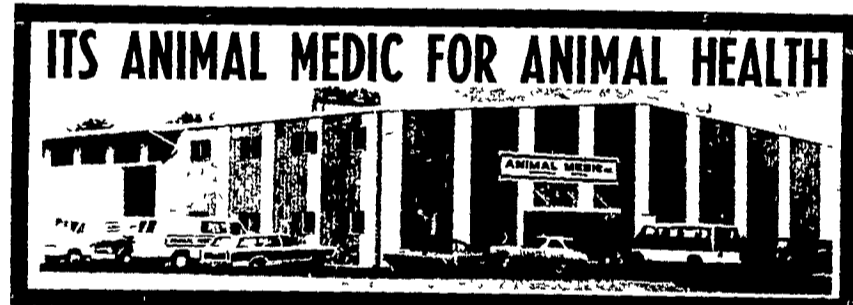
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