

## Sheep skills taught at 4-H field day

By KENDACE BORRY ATGLEN — Last Wednesday was a busy day for members of the Golden Fleece 4-H Sheep Club in Chester County. A field day was held at the home of Mr and Mrs William Mac-Cauley, Atglen, where activities throughout the day

strengthened 4-H'ers skills and knowledge in sheep husbandry.

The morning centered around sheep fitting, with everyone having an animal to work on. Older members helped younger members as all clipped and learned the correct techniques to get

their sheep to look its best and catch the judge's eye in the show ring.

After a picnic lunch, the group gathered again to hear Joe Stricktmatter, manager of the New Bolton Swine Center, speak on genetics and breeding programs for sheep.

He told the youths to have a goal in mind when breeding their sheep, to know the type of animal that they want to produce.

Then he talked of the different breeds, noting some of the advantages and characteristics of each.

In crossbreeding, he told that in the mother breed the things to look for are easy lambing, the milking ability, multiple births and good wool. In the ram breeds, he urged them to look for growth, the size for the age of the animal, the rate of gain per day, and the carcass desirability.

A good market lamb should have growth (size) and when finished correctly, be trim and meaty.

He talked of "F1" generations in sheep crossbreeding, telling that through crossbreeding, one

can gain maximum heterosis. That is, that the most desirable traits of both parent breeds are passed on through crossbreeding.

Sheep seem to be popular today, and more lambs may be held back for breeding than should be, he added. So that breeders may end up with some "genetic junk", he cautioned.

Don't follow the fads, he reminded the youthful sheep fanciers, just decide what you want your sheep to look like and strive towards that goal.

After the speaker,

members took to the sheep flock again where each was assigned an animal to show for showmanship. They were then judged on their showmanship abilities, and a workshop on showing techniques was held.

Top senior showman was Jeff Baroni; Billy Mac-Cauley was top intermediate showman; and Craig Baroni was placed first in the junior division.

The youngsters finished up the day with some good old fashioned fun, heading down to the swimming hole and playing softball.

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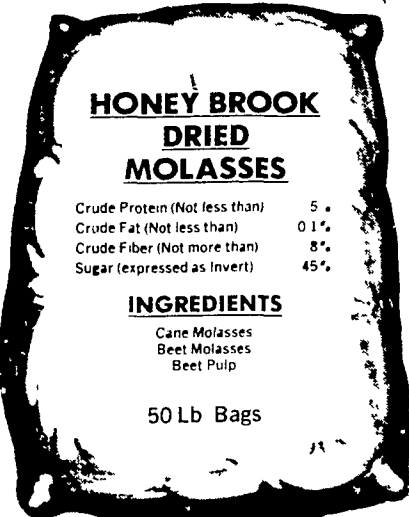


While members of Chester County's Golden Fleece Club practice their showmanship, Cheryl Morgan, assistant extension agent for the county,

judges them on their skills. The clinic was held as part of the club's field day, held at Breezeview Farms, Atglen.



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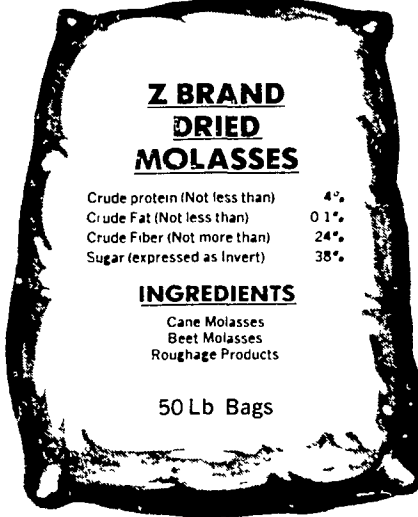
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