

Arlen Keener's past desires are present realities

BY DEBRA STRICKLER RHEEMS — "I'd like to be a herdsman on a dairy farm and have the opportunity to keep a couple of Holsteins of my own," Arlen Keener told Lancaster Farming two years ago.

His past desire has become a present reality.

This week he will receive the Eastern Regional Star Agri-business Degree at the State Future Farmers of America convention.

At the State Farm Show, Arlen will also be showing his own Holsteins.

Arlen is a full-time herdsman on the Penn Springs Farm, owned by Robert and Mim Kauffman of R1 Elizabethtown.

His daily responsibilities include checking the herd, milking the cows and keeping the barn in order. Arlen recently attended the ABS school to learn the techniques of artificial insemination. He assists Bob in breeding the cows.

In addition to being herdsman, Arlen owns a small dairy herd which includes two Holstein cows and five heifers.

Arlen is especially proud of August Hill Rockman Leseyla, a two year old. After a first place finish in March's State Holstein Show and a top honor earner in other shows, Leseyla was recently named the 1979 All-Pennsylvania Two-Year-Old Heifer.

Arlen explains, "after the show season is over, I submitted a complete record including Leseyla's show and production records and a picture. A panel of six

judges chose her as the All-Pennsylvania two-year-old heifer.

"Next week, I'll try again at the Farm Show," Arlen adds.

This year Leseyla will be competing in the three year old class competition.

Leseyla's production record is as impressive as her show honors. In 295 days of testing, she produced 17,595 pounds of milk at 3.7 percent to yield 657 pounds of butterfat. Before the years end, she will top the 20,000 pound mark.

Arlen purchased the outstanding female from Robert Young, a neighbor and former employer.

He finds it ironic, that he bought Leseyla for the least amount of money, and she is doing the best.

He has had a number of misfortunes with the first heifers he showed.

The Kauffman's provided Arlen with a heifer the first year he showed in 4-H competition. He earned a blue ribbon at the County show, but lost the heifer the day before the District Show.

His second heifer was sold to buyers from Africa.

In 1976 he bought his own heifer at a state calf sale.

This heifer was due to calve at the Farm Show. The Kauffman's encouraged Arlen to enter the heifer and have a farm show calf. The heifer had difficulties in its labor. The Valley Animal Hospital performed a cesarian, however the calf was lost. Unfortunately, the cow never recovered either.

Although similar ex-

periences may have caused many young people to give up hope, Arlen continues to improve his herd.

He contemplates buying more heifers, although he is not so sure about the future. "I like to live one day at a time, I was never a person that set many goals."

He modestly comments, I never expected to own the 1979 All-Pennsylvania Two-Year-Old or earn the Eastern Regional Star Agri-business degree.

"I always do the best I can, I try to do it right, and then wait to see what happens."

This Summer Arlen placed third in the State 4-H Dairy Judging Contest. He then competed in Madison, Wisconsin during the World Dairy Expo.

In the breed he knows best, Holsteins, Arlen took the first place national honors. He earned sixth place in reasons, and placed ninth in the individual competition. The Pennsylvania team placed twelfth in the nation.

As a FFA member at Elizabethtown High School, Arlen's projects did not only include dairy. He had a swine project with a friend. "We didn't make any money, but we had a lot of fun," Arlen says.

As the son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Keener, Arlen does not reside on a farm. He can remember raising broiler in a shed behind their home.

"I caught a pig at the Soil Conservation Service field day, and kept it in the backyard too," he added.

Asked why he decided to maintain his dairy herd,



Arlen Keener is proud of Leseyla. She was recently named the 1979 All-Pennsylvania Two Year Old Heifer. This week begins a new show year at the State Farm Show.

Arlen will receive his Star Regional Agri-business Degree during the FFA Convention.

Arlen replies, "I have the most interest in dairy and I have the most invested here."

While in high school, Arlen worked for many neighboring farmers. He really appreciates the opportunity he had to work for different people.

There were times when he was expected at more than one place at the same time.

"I have to keep busy, if I have five minutes with nothing to do, I get very bored."

Now, he is busy doing odd jobs in preparation for showing at the Farm Show.

His evenings are often booked with Club meetings. He is presently serving as a director of the Lancaster County Junior Holstein Club. He is president of the Lancaster County 4-H Club and is a member of the State and National Junior Holstein Associations. He is active in the Elizabethtown Menonite Youth Fellowship.

Arlen is appreciative of the support of William Erickson, the Elizabethtown FFA Advisor. He encouraged me to complete the Keystone Degree form.

It is also obvious that

Arlen is appreciative of the Kauffman family. They have encouraged him as a young boy and have employed him as a young man.

Without a doubt, the Kauffman's have contributed to Arlen's desire to show cattle, begin his own herd, work as a herdsman, and his present honor - the Eastern Regional Agri-business Degree.



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