

At Farm Show's Junior Swine Show

Trostle competes to uphold champion reign

BY JOYCE BUYP
Staff Correspondent

RED LION — When the junior market swine show gets underway in the small arena of the Farm Show Thursday morning, it's a good bet that York County 4-H'er Steve Trostle will be parading one of his purebred Spots before the judge's critical eye.

After all, Trostle has a reputation to uphold. Last year, he wrapped up his Farm Show participation by

winning the title of champion junior swine showman. His Spotted gilt entry won the reserve champion award in the light heavyweight category and then brought 70 cents per pound on the sale's auction block.

But Farm Show swine competition is not something an exhibitor enters on a spur-of-the-moment whim. It takes months of planning. First, according to Trostle, a couple of sows must be bred at just the right time,

allowing for the 115 days of gestation time and a calculated guesstimate at how long it will take to feed the litter to ideal show size.

"In my opinion the ideal market show weight is 225 pounds," figures the husky, dark-haired 4-H'er. "It takes about six months to get hogs to that gain level.

Trostle emphasizes that it's harder to be a consistent show winner with market hogs than with breeding animals.

"Showing a market hog is a one-time thing," he says, "because the animal is then usually sold right at the show. Only where two shows fall close together is it possible to exhibit a winning hog more than once before it grows too heavy."

Breeding and raising hogs is a family involvement for

the Trostle family of R2 Red Lion, where they help Steve maintain a breeding herd of up to 15 of the purebred Spotted sows. Steve's dad, Ron, is a herdsman for the Lanius dairying operation and a recognized judge in both swine and dairy. Mother Yvonne grew up on a farm that raised hogs and remains involved assisting at the county's swine meetings and shows, while younger sister Melissa also raises 4-H hog project animals.

"Hogs are very intelligent and can be trained to do all sorts of things," Trostle notes. "And contrary to popular belief, they will never overeat, only consume what their body requires; and they won't eat just anything, either."

"Also, they're the only

animal besides man that will drink enough alcohol to become intoxicated," he grins, adding this dubious bit of hog lore.

But, according to Trostle, feeding champion hogs is no big secret, just using "common sense", as he puts it.

"We feed a premixed concentrate, and then finish them out with oats and a high-protein feed," he adds.

An avid 4-H'er who took on thirteen projects during his second year in the program, Trostle has since screened his interests down to a few major categories. One of the favorites besides hogs is rabbitry.

The second floor of a small barn houses Trostle's expanding families of American Checkered rabbits. The animals are im-

pressively large and handsome, white with either gray or black side, back and face markings. A special pride and joy is the doe that weighs 15 pounds and won top honors at the York Farm Show recently.

That winning was especially heartwarming for Steve.

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One of Trostle's newer livestock activities is the breeding of pedigreed American Checkered rabbits.

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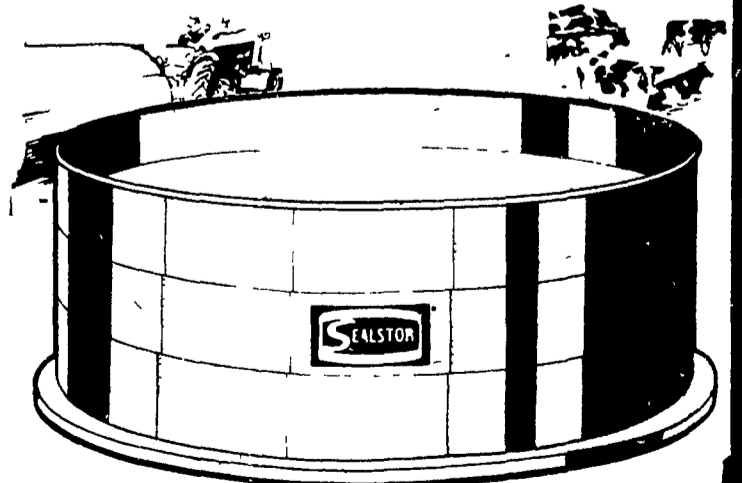
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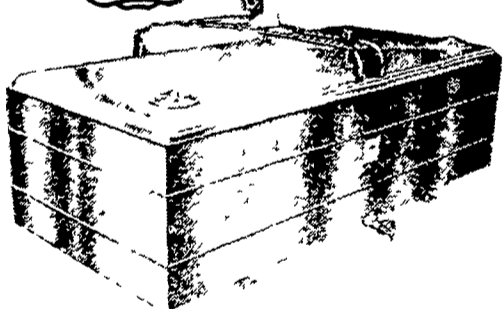


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