

Lebanon's is farmers' fun fair



Ready to run — Dale Balmer demonstrates the two-finger style of milking, with a stance that keeps him well out of range of a well-aimed foot.



Troy Bucher puts his mind to milking this high volume Holstein.



"And they said this was going to be a piece of cake." Alan Balmer appears to be looking for some advice on just what to do next.



Ed Kegereis of R2 Myerstown won the title for the second consecutive year of champion bale thrower of the Lebanon Fair

LEBANON — Although there is a lot of serious competition between farmers during the Lebanon Area Fair — who has the best hay, corn, cows, hogs, goats, lambs, and steers — there is always time for fun.

At this year's Fun Night, held Tuesday evening in between the raindrops, farmers could match their skills and 'show off' for a crowd of admiring city cousins on just how a good Lebanon County farmer can hoist a straw balé, spit tobacco, milk a cow, dress a calf, and haul a load in a wheel barrow.

The kids got the first crack at the fun, to the delight of farmers and spectators, alike, as they tugged and pulled an array of costumes over the spindly, uncooperative joints and limbs of bewildered dairy calves. Winning the event by crowd consensus in the 8-12 age group were Kathy Mase and Andrea Wampler of Lebanon. Although their calf spent most of its time on the ground, the girls struggled to outfit it in a cheerleaders costume, complete with pom poms.

Lebanon County's dairy princess, Joanne Weidman, Lebanon and partner Theresa Tyson, Palmyra, captured the crowd's enthusiastic approval for their comical clown calf. The calf's outfit was perfection — from the tip of its hat to its floppy shoes. The dairy princess created the 'calf original'.

Others competing in the calf dressing contest included: Laura Harding and Krista Hetrick; Wesley Harding and Matthew Hetrick; and Marlin and Marilyn Deaven.

As the calves exited the dairy tent for the safety of the barns, four unsuspecting dairy cows were led into the midst of hundreds of spectators for the grueling hand milking contest. Little did they know they were in for an old-fashioned tug 'o war.

Youngsters and older folks who probably should have known better took up their pails to test their manual dexterity against the clock and the ever-challenging power to 'let-or-not-let down' that is the whim of every dairy cow.

In a sheer display of skill, Bob Bomberger captured the blue ribbon in the 18 & Under contest, followed by Troy Bucher, Brian Adley, Allen Balmer, and Tony Bucher.

For those in the 19 & Older division, there was an obvious line of demarcation between the trained and untrained hand. Taking first place with the most milk in the pail was Luke Hagy, followed by Ruben Houser, Connie

Hoffer, Ernest Koons, and 'Skillful' Miller.

Even before all the ribbons were handed out, farmers and spectators headed over for the unrivaled event, the tobacco spitting contest where some of the counties best showed just how far and how accurately they could

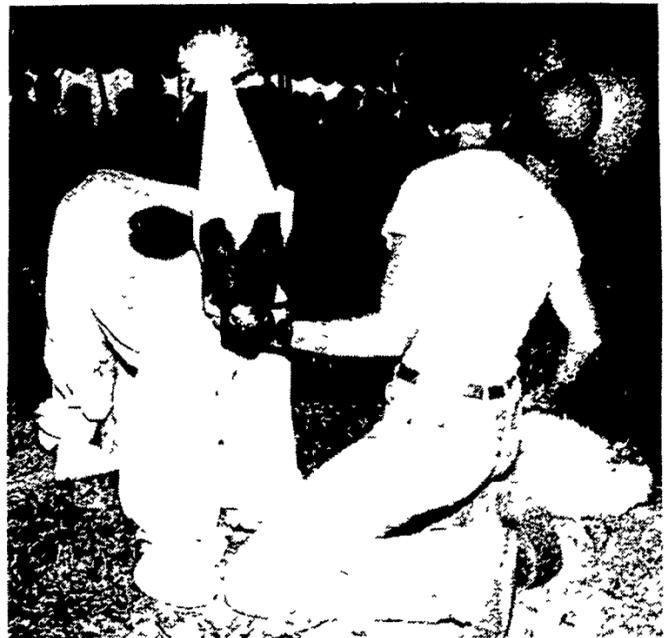
project a streak (but usually spray) of brown juice. This wasn't a contest for the spectator with a weak stomach.

In the end, the Lebanon County chewers were bested by a neighboring Lancaster County chewer

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"Oh, what those two-legged creatures won't do for a good laugh. Dressing me up in this crazy clown costume is the craziest thing Joanne, who represents me as a princess, has done, yet."



"Now what's Theresa looking for? Uh oh — she's going for those rings of plastic. They wouldn't dare."



"Why would anyone want to hide this adorable face underneath all that stuff? I guess it's all part of being a clown. Just so this doesn't get back to my barn pals. I'll be glad when Joanne's reign is over or I grow up, whichever comes first."