



Betty Jean graces a picture of the lush, fertile Oley Valley in Berks County — County's 1981-82 dairy princess and finds the job quiet exciting. Read her story below: the setting of her family's 198-acre dairy farm. Betty now reigns as Berks

## Betty Jean makes farming a 'royal' opportunity

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Betty Jean Hoch, Berks County's newest dairy princess has grown up in a rural setting which most people could only have experienced in story books.

Located along the Manatawny Creek in the lush and fertile Oley Valley, the Hoch's farm on which this dairy princess was raised sits next to one of the few remaining covered bridges still being used, Greismer's Mill Bridge. From Betty Jean's house, a low, quiet rumbling of the wooden bridge spanning the creek can be heard as cars enter as horse and buggy did in years past.

Dairying has been in the Hoch

family for many years. Both of Betty Jean's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Hoch, were born and raised on farms, and one of Betty's four older brothers, Mark, is presently farming "the Old Hoch" farm which has been in the family since 1728.

Unlike her recent predecessor however, Betty Jean was not in the public "eye" as a dairy showman or involved with dairy clubs on the county and state levels. Betty has always been involved with the family dairy herd however, helping as much as possible for as long as she can remember. Betty Jean's interests in 4-H were more inclined to sewing. She also went to Vocational-Technical school to

study clothing and sewing, and is presently attending McCann's School of Business in Reading for fashion merchandising and sales management.

Betty Jean enjoys sewing her own clothes when time permits. This year she has made some skirts and vests and a blazer. Some day she hopes to have her own business but also hopes to be able to settle back on a farm.

Betty continues to help at home whenever possible. She and her mother usually do the milking during the summer. Betty Jean also helps make hay, clean the barn, feeds and tends to the fence.

"I have always loved to be outside," she relates. "I used to

help my father make fence around the creek. I especially liked to wade across the creek with the wire for him," she said happily.

Betty Jean also stressed how she and her family get the other chores done by being organized. The Hoch's are presently milking fifty head of registered, grade Holsteins, and farm 198 acres of crop land. They recently started with DHIA and Betty Jean has been very interested with the program.

"My father explained to me how to read the information and what the different things meant," she said. "Our family is very happy and glad we started using it," Betty Jean added.

Betty Jean's brother, Richard works on the farm full time with his father. Her brother, Barry works on a turkey farm and another brother, Randall, has a sandwich shop. Mark, as already mentioned, has his own farm and milks about 50 cows.

Betty Jean also works part time at a sandwich shop but tries to keep room between her schooling, working, and dairy princess activities to help at home.

"If I don't, I really miss it," she said.

Betty Jean also enjoys sports such as skiing, skating, snowmobiling and swimming.

This 18-year-old dairy princess

also was involved in track while in high school, competing in the shot-put and javelin.

Another of Betty Jean's hobbies surprisingly enough is muskrat trapping. Last year she used twelve traps but didn't catch very many rats she related.

"I don't know how good it will be this year either," she said thoughtfully. "The creek is very low right now."

The Hoch's also do their own butchering, usually around Christmas time when everyone can be around to help.

"We make our own sausage, scrapple and smoked meats". Betty Jean explained, "It really spoils you to store bought foods," she added.

Betty Jean's mother also has a large garden and freezes and cans much of the produce. "I'll help with shelling sometimes," the dairy princess remarked with a wry smile.

Asked how she came to be interested in being Berks County's Dairy Princess, Betty Jean explained that she became interested when a friend, Janice Savidge, last year's alternate dairy princess, told her about it.

"No one from the Oley Valley ever was chosen before," Betty Jean said. "I thought I'd try it. I

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A dairy princess and her dairy cows go together like a horse and carriage, or so the song 'sort of' goes. But song or not, this young

princess brings her own harmony to her promotional activities.

# Homestead Notes