

The Champ 'returns'

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO

LANCASTER — Webster defines knowledge as "the body of truth and facts accumulated over the course of time."

During the next three weeks Lancaster Countians can see and hear truth and facts about cattle accumulated in the very large body of a fiberglass cow, The Champ.

The 25-year-old display, constructed by Ralston Purina traveled from St. Louis, Miss. to

make its first appearance in the county in 20 years.

Sponsored by Keystone Mills, Ephrata, The Champ, a walk-through lesson in ruminants was displayed at Oregon Dairy's farm and store this past week.

Visitors entering the Champ's left side are greeted by the constant thumps simulating heart beats.

"Welcome to the remarkable ruminant," says a voice which seems to come from the lungs. Throughout the tour, the voice

explains the various metabolic processes, including digestion and beef and milk making, all of which are illustrated in the spacious 8-foot-wide interior.

Moving toward the rump, folks get a glimpse of a big bellyful of hay, massaged by simulated rumen motion.

The right side of the Champ houses an udder and a model of an unborn calf which depicts development from 30 days to a 9-month embryo.

"This is a family-oriented display," said Keystone Mills owner, Harold Kurtz. He explained that the majority of the Champ's visitors arrive after school.

The 12-foot tall, 19-foot long white-faced display was developed from a 29 inch clay model. The present fiberglass and plastic body was formed from a full-size mold of wood framing, wire mesh and modeling clay. During construction in 1956, the amount of clay needed for the full-size model was so large that it depleted the entire supply of modeling clay available in the country.

A research team of veterinarians, sculptors, nutritionists and artists conducted a series of studies to make the display accurate and educational.

In the past, the Champ has proved to be quite popular, touring the U.S., Canada and Europe.

Kurtz explained he had to order the Champ more than a year in advance for this weeks display.

The big bovine expected in the Blue Ball area on Monday, will then travel to the Andrew Miller Farm, west of Manheim on October 30, and finish its Lancaster County tour at Quarryville Community Park on November 3.



Keystone Mills owner, Harold Kurtz, right, and Ralston Purina sales manager Paul Hann, left, are about to lean the ins and outs of a ruminants via the Champ's walk-in tour which explains everything from digestion to calving.



Kurtz adjusts the true "guts" of the display, a small fortune of stereo equipment which regulates narration, lights and movements of the Champ's plastic and fiberglass viscera.



This model of a fully formed embryo is just one of the many educational displays contained in the Champ's 12-foot high, 8-foot wide structure.



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