

To Penn State and York County

Third-generation livestock judge brings home nat'l honors

BY GINGER SECRIST MYERS
Staff Correspondent
PLEASANT HILL — On a corner wall of Dale Werner's dining room hangs a small plaque measuring only six inches by four inches. It

bears the inscription "York County Livestock Team 1956 - Dale Werner." That plaque represents Dale Werner's 4-H livestock judging expertise under the direction of his

father who was the county 4-H leader for livestock at that time. Warner won a trip to the National Livestock Judging Contest held in Chicago that same year.

Across the room is a span of wall that is virtually plastered with plaques and awards. Spilling over into the next room is a collection of sterling silver bowls, two watches, ribbons, show canes, and even a \$75 western hat. All of these are livestock judging awards and they all belong to Dale's daughter, Brenda. Last November Brenda won top individual national honors at the National Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Contest in Louisville, Ky.

Brenda, a senior this year at Penn State majoring in animal production, out scored 205 contestants from 41 teams to become the first Penn State student to ever win the title. The team, under the direction of head coach Erskine Cash and assistant coach Daniel Loy, placed fourth nationally by ranking first in judging sheep, third in beef cattle, and fifth in swine. The team included Mary Street of New Loudon, Dale Rains of Mercer, Robert Hough of Alexandria, and Lee Johnston of New Alexandria.

Winning a national title or even a spot on Penn State's livestock team is no easy task.

Explained Brenda "Of the first two weeks of school, I think I got to three days of classes. There were

15 of us trying to win one of the five spots on the team.

"We judged a lot in Ohio and New York on our way to Eastern States. After that, we judged almost every night after school to prepare for our other contests.

"Sometimes it seems that your studies have to take a back seat, but you want to give the team your best because it is a once in a lifetime experience."

Evidently Brenda's studies never suffered since she presently carries a 3.5 grade point average out of a possible 4.0.

Brenda is no stranger to the hard work that goes with becoming a good judge. Having grown up in York county on her father's Yorkshire hog farm, Brenda was active in the 4-H livestock program.

In 1977 she was a member of York County's winning meats judging team at 4-H State Days. That same team traveled to Kansas City where they placed first in the nation that year.

In 1978 she was a member of her county livestock judging team which captured the blue ribbon at State Days competition and went on to place third in national competition in Louisville, Ky.

Brenda has found judging livestock beneficial to her education. It also has its lighter side.

"The experience of being on the team and having the opportunity to

travel was great. In judging you have to master communicative skills, be highly knowledgeable about each species, and it teaches you about decision-making. It's pretty competitive, but I've made a lot of new friends through my judging experiences."

While livestock judging requires the contestants to judge different species of animals, Brenda observes that basically a judge looks for the same components in each. These include "structural correctness, capacity, and volume." However Brenda said she sees some patterns emerging within the species.

"Sheep are pretty conservative and haven't changed their conformation much. The beef people changed what they wanted about ten years ago and I think they're pretty content now. But the hog industry has done a lot of radical changing in the last two years."

"With more confinement housing in the hog industry, they're looking for hogs that are more three-dimensional rather than just long and lean. The hog industry is looking for a hog with more substance of bone to stand on slatted floors and more body capacity with the hope that they will be more disease-resistant. I use terms to describe width in my oral reasons for swine now that we would have laughed at when I was judging in 4-H."

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Brenda Werner, Pleasant Hill, poses with some of the awards she has won while judging on the Penn State Livestock Team. Brenda competed at Eastern States Exposition, the Keystone Exposition, the Eastern National, Kansas City, and in Louisville where she captured National Champion honors.

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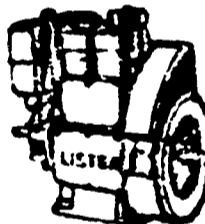
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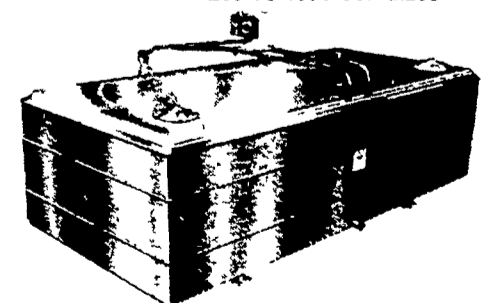
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