

She's a 5-lb. Guardian Angel of Holsteins

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

WILLOW STREET — The herd of Holsteins stretch across the sloping pasture land. Some munch the lush meadow grass; others re Chew their earlier breakfast eaten in the barn.

Overhead, fluffy clouds drift across the blue.

Nearby, a swollen stream laps softly against eroded banks.

Then, all of a sudden, you hear — rather than see — something that at first appears completely foreign to this pastoral serenity.

A staccato frenzy of yipping and yapping erupts from amidst the flotilla of black and white in the sea of green.

Looking closely, you spot a small head that appears for a split-second above a clump of grass.

What is it? Who is it?

Why it's the "Guardian Angel" of Holsteins along Gypsy Hill Road off Rt. 222 south of Lancaster.

This guardian angel of bovines makes up for in sheer guts and bravado what she lacks in size.

This canine caretaker who has adopted an entire herd of Holsteins and protects their safety round the clock appears to be a mixture of terrier and chihuahua that tips the scales at about one-twentieth the weight that some of her charges milk in a day.

And the herd that she has taken under her tiny paw is that of Roger Mills, 1343 Gypsy Hill Road, Lancaster.

"She just came walking in off the street about five years ago and has stayed ever since," Mills said.

"As soon as we turn the cows out in the morning, she's with them.

"And she stays with them every minute out in the pasture.

"The only time that she comes back to the barn is if it is raining real hard."

The Mills family has named the Holstein house mother "Suzie."

And she takes her self-assumed job very seriously.

"Two years ago, Paul Welk of Peach Bottom bought one of our heifers at the All-American," Mills explained.

"We brought her back to the farm and Paul came up one Sunday morning to get her while we were in church.

"Well, Suzie wouldn't let him in that stall for some time.

"That particular heifer seemed to be a favorite of hers.

"And when the truck drove off, Suzie followed it all the way to 222 before coming back."

Ever since, Suzie hasn't picked another favorite but she appears to take her total responsibility of the entire herd more seriously.

"Ask the vet or anyone, Suzie lets you know when you walk into her barn.

"Suzie will bury herself in one of the box stalls and even when I



Can you notice anything unusual hidden in this pastoral and peaceful dairy scene. Likely not. But camouflaged among

might come out at night to check on a cow, she sounds the alarm."

Thus, Suzie's alarm emits from beneath the bedding and newcomers don't know what to make of these sounds that come from a feisty five pounds of feminine fury whose adopted family towers over her.

The hock-high sentinel even stops traffic along Gypsy Hill Road.

It's not unusual for passing motorists to stop at gawk at the dog that's stretched out on the back and neck of a lounging cow in the pasture.

And, Suzie is truly a cow dog — not a people dog.

"We have two other dogs, but Suzie rarely comes even close to the house," Mills said.

"The barn and pasture are her domain."

Suzie eats right on the job, preferring to pilfer a little of the snacks left for the barn cats.

But doesn't this Guardian Angel of Holsteins sound too good to be true.

After all, where can you get a 24-hour-a-day herdsman who asks for nothing in return other than to be with her "family."

Well, to be truthful, Suzie does have one vice.

"She really likes candy and

those Black and Whites and almost swallowed up by the tall lush meadow grass is the Guardian Angel of Holsteins.

But after Suzie accepts her sweet, it's right back to her Holsteins.

And she makes it quite clear that no chocolate bribe is going to affect her duty and responsibility as Guardian Angel of Holsteins.



Suzie comes out of the herd to acknowledge Roger Mills, whose herd of Holsteins has its own fulltime canine caretaker.



This is where Suzie is most at home -- right in the middle of her adopted Holstein herd.



If you look closely (arrow), Suzie the sentinel stands guard along Gypsy Hill Road in Lancaster County.