

Being state dairy princess is life of 'firsts'

BY JOYCE BUPP
Staff Correspondent

VOLANT — Since her crowning last September as the Pennsylvania Dairy Princess, Jolene Snyder has seen a lot of "firsts" come into her life.

Soon after her selection as the state dairy industry's spokeswoman, Jolene boarded a plane for her first flight, to attend the first of several out-of-state dairy meetings, representing Pennsylvania.

In January, she attended the Pennsylvania State Farm Show for the first time.

Two weeks ago, in Philadelphia, she taped her first television appearances, one with early-morning talk show host Gary Geer, and another with Captian Noah, host of a long-running children's show.

While she was there, along with New Jersey princess Lisa Francisco and Holly Webb of Delaware, Jolene visited the Philadelphia zoo for the first time. At the zoo, the trio of dairy princesses had the chance to visit with a large number of children and speak with them in the amphitheatre about life on the farm, as a dairy princess, and on the nutritional values of milk and dairy products.

"The time has gone so fast; it doesn't seem that long ago since the pageant," says the pretty, poised high school senior. Thursday evening, she graduated with her classmates during commencement exercises at New Wilmington High School.

Already, her summer scheduled is almost booked to capacity with official appearances at events such as mall promotions, farm tours and television appearances. In September, she'll follow the career footsteps of her mother and enter nursing training at Shadyside Hospital School of Nursing in Pittsburgh.

"I'm not sure just what field of nursing interests me the most right now," she explains, adding that she expects exposure to various areas of medical work will spark her interest in a particular specialty. Her training will be a two-year-straight schedule, and then she plans to follow that up with continued courses to earn her Bachelor's degree.

While Jolene has had to miss quite a few days of school to fulfill her princess duties, she doesn't feel that her overall education has suffered. In fact, the dairy princess experience is an education in itself, she believes, and has greatly broadened her outlook on life.

"There are so many things that you can't experience from a book. When we were in Philadelphia, Mr. Weber (Ray Weber of Dairy Council) made a point of stopping at the Liberty Bell so that we could see it and the area around Independence Hall," Jolene explains.

Exposure to such gala events as the Governor's Inauguration Ball at the Governor's mansion and the June dairy month proclamation signing at the Harrisburg Capitol

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In the final months of her reign as state dairy princess, Jolene Snyder is busier than ever promoting milk. Among the many special mementos she's received are the silver pitcher from the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association, a hand-painted cow on slate, from the New Wilmington Grange, and, of course, her well-used crown and banner.

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In appreciation for the outstanding job she's done representing them, the Beaver-Lawrence dairy promotion committee presented Jolene Snyder with an initial-engraved, diamond ring.

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