

Preparing for the District 4-H Dairy Show

BY TRISH WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON BORO — As county 4-H dairy shows across the state wind up, blue ribbon winners are looking forward to the district 4-H dairy show where they will have the opportunity to compete on a higher scale, with other top caliber blue ribbon winners from surrounding counties. 4-H members are working to prepare their heifers and themselves for that day when they will make their best showing at district.

Robert, Thomas, and Susan Barley are three individual 4-H members from Lancaster County who will be competing at the Southcentral District 4-H Dairy Show in Harrisburg on August 29.

When the Barley's enter the showing they will be competing as individuals, but the three have worked as a team, helping one another to prepare for the event.

Robert, the oldest, soon to be 14 years old, is a veteran showman, bringing six years of showing experience to the task of preparation. He has helped to teach Tom, 12, and Susan, 10, the ins and outs of showing, from selecting a heifer to show, to training the heifer to lead, to proper grooming.

With support and guidance from their parents, John and Jane Barley, the three have learned quickly the best methods for getting a heifer ready.

"When the kids first started showing they were not at the top of the class very often," Mrs. Barley

comments, "after a couple years of experience they were doing much better."

But perseverance has paid off for the three Barleys. This year at the Lancaster County 4-H show between the three they brought home 16 fitting and showing ribbons as well as blue ribbons for type classes.

Competing against each other in the intermediate calf class, they took the top three placings, Robert first, Tom second, and Susan third. In the senior calf class Tom took first with Robert standing right next to him with his second place heifer. Again in the junior yearling class two Barleys went to the head of the class, Robert first and Susan second. Robert won the Junior Champion with his junior yearling heifer.

Robert is a good judge of cattle and recently competed in the dairy judging contest at State 4-H Achievement Days as a member of the Lancaster County team that took fourth place in the competition. He advises "In selecting a heifer to show, look for one that is upstanding and sharp. Remember to consider the age of the calf, try to get a calf born very early in the class so it will be older and larger than other calves in the class."

Show heifers get preferential treatment at the Barley's Star Rock Farm. They are taken from the rest of the herd sometime in early May, and put into separate pens, where they are fed, extra grain, the best hay on the farm, beet pulp, and extra protein.



Star Rock Farm's winning team. In the back Robert and Tom, veteran showman, in the front, left, Cindy who is already learning to show for next year when she will be old enough to join 4-H, and Susan who has been showing for two years.

Tom who won Master Showman at last years county show, suggests, "It's best to start training the heifer to lead early, at least two months before the show. We have found it is better to lead the heifers 10 to 20 minutes a day for a couple of months rather than try to lead the heifer for a couple hours a day for the two weeks before the show."

"If we have a lot of work, we might skip a day, but you can afford to do that if you start early," Tom continues. "We generally don't lead on Sunday. We keep the heifers in pens near the house so it is convenient, and most of the time we lead the heifers under the shade tree on the lawn where it is comfortable for both the heifer and the leader. Uncooperative heifers can make it discouraging at times, but stick with it, don't give up."

"Clipping the heifers is also important, especially in the fitting classes," Robert says. "The idea is to try to clip the heifer so her parts look like the blend together smoothly, and so she looks sharp over the withers, and level over the tailhead."

Susan specializes in grooming. She suggests, "Good grooming is very important, because you must have both a blue ribbon in fitting and showing on the same animal,

to compete in the fitting and showing class."

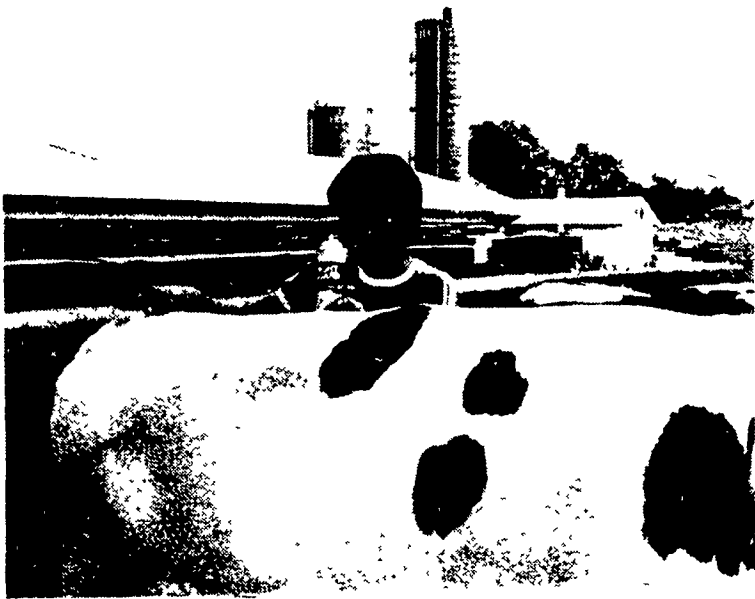
"In the showing," Susan advises, "It is important to keep an eye on both your animal and the judge. Make sure your heifer is set up correctly and that you are showing her at her best. Watch the judge at all times for a signal. If you miss a signal from the judge to bring your heifer into the line-up you may lose your place."

Robert and Tom emphasize the importance of knowing the birthdate of your heifer, and other information about her that the judge may ask you.

Keeping your record books up to date is a must, says Susan. Without complete records on your heifer you will not be permitted to show.

Keeping good records on feed costs, veterinarian bills, growth of your heifer and other important costs will help you to be a good dairyman.

To all the young aspiring dairymen and women who will be competing in the Southcentral District 4-H Show on August 29, good luck. Lancaster Farming will be there to cheer you on and carry the highlights and results of the show in our next issue.



A trick Robert learned to smooth out the tailhead on his white heifer is to spray the hair with Rightguard and brush the hair on end.



Tom demonstrates the proper method of clipping the withers. Susan holds the heifer's head up, like it will be in the showing.

Dairy Day V Aug. 29

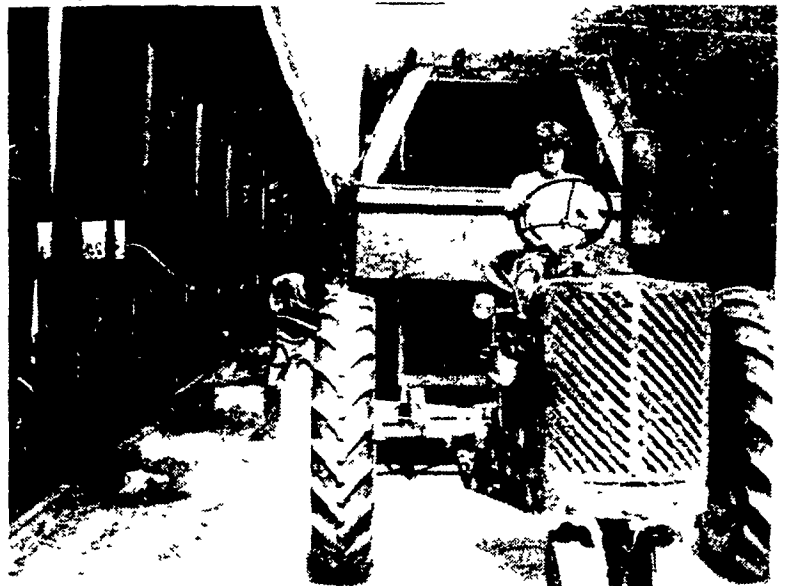
SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The dairy industry is a vital part of New York State's economy. It comprises the largest segment of New York's top industry - agriculture. For this reason, the New York State Fair has set aside a special day, Dairy Day, in order to pay tribute to New York's 16,000 dairy farmers. Dairy Day V begins at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, August 29 at the New York State Fair.

Featured this year will be a series of dairy presentations and special events. A new edition to the program is the Big Top Tent which will offer free samples of delicious dairy products from vendors across the state. Key government officials, media representatives and dairy industry leaders will assemble in order to develop a greater awareness and understanding of dairying in New York State.

Show your support for the dairy farmers of New York State by attending Dairy Day V at the Fair. The public is welcome. For further information contact Christine Siebold at (315) 472-9143.



Susan believes good grooming is important, because it helps to improve the heifer's general appearance. Sister Cindy helps to hold the heifer.



Robert and Tom are responsible for feeding over 300 heifers on their family's farm. With the money they earned they have both bought calves for showing at the Pennsylvania on Parade Sale.