

Football scores, explaining birth

Welsh family practices PR at Farm Show

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EAST BERLIN — Sunday afternoon visitors to the Farm Show often pause near one of the numerous portable televisions brought along by livestock exhibitors for entertainment, and a quick update on the day's latest football scores.

Last year, spectator requests for the latest score on a particular football battle came so frequently that Brown Swiss 4-H dairy exhibitor Mike Welsh devised a "scoreboard" for their benefit.

"There were so many people asking the score and what quarter it was that I took a piece of paper and stuck it on the television aerial," recalls Mike with a grin of remembrance.

"As the score and the quarters changed, we'd change the paper."

Relaying football scores was just the beginning of a week of communicating with the record Farm Show crowd that kept Mike, his mother Emilie, and brother Tom and his wife Carol, talking endlessly last year.

When their Sandrock R Vivian gave birth to a bull calf early in the week, the crowds gathering around the Welsh's Ponderosa farms exhibit area grew even thicker.

Few occurrences at the Farm Show draw more attention than the birth of a calf, and "Elmer," as the youngster was named, provided the Welshs with an excellent opportunity for public relations chatting.

"There were so many questions," relates Emilie. "Lots of people don't understand, for instance, why heifers don't have udders.

That was just one thing we could explain."

As hundreds stopped by to pet the calf and talk to the big cow that had taken first place in her class, the personal touch that crowds appreciate from the Farm Show exhibitors gave the Welsh's a chance to talk dairying.

"People don't seem to be in a real big hurry when they come to the Farm Show," figures Emilie. "They want to visit with the exhibitors, and spend some time finding out what is happening in agriculture."

Farm Show participation for the James Welsh family, East Berlin R1, began back with their four sons' 4-H project animals. While the Ponderosa herd was primarily Holsteins, each of the youngsters also raised and exhibited colored breed individuals as well.

Gary and Joey, the two older sons, are no longer involved in the dairy operation. Third son, Tom, and his wife Carol, have joined the family farm and own their own string of Brown Swiss, tracing back to Tom's 4-H animals. Eight of their best are headed for this year's Farm Show competition.

Mike, the youngest of the Welsh's sons, led a little Jersey calf on his first trip into the 4-H showing as an eight-year-old rookie. As she grew and developed, Sibyl earned Mike numerous championships during her half-dozen years of tanbark competition, and remains in his 4-H herd.

Then, in 1978, while attending the Mid-Atlantic calf sale, Mike selected a Brown Swiss calf for project work.



Mike Welsh and his NAILE junior champion, Welsh Ponderosa Kings Bobbi Jo, launch a new year of showing challenges, beginning with this week's Farm Show.

Bred by Chris Morley of Bel-Air, Maryland, McCoy Delegate Princess went to the 1979 Farm Show as Mike's junior calf. He's brought her back every year since.

Now six years old, "big" Princess holds several York Fair open class and 4-H championships and was a junior champion winner at the Farm Show.

But it was her daughter, "Welsh's Ponderosa Titan Princess," affectionately called "little Princess," that Mike exhibited to show circuit history earlier this year.

Competing in the junior show at the November North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky, "little Princess," showing as a youthful two-year-old, claimed first in the class, senior and grand champion and capped that off with the award as best bred and owned female at this national junior Brown Swiss competition.

Her winnings topped Mike's claiming earlier in that show of the junior champion honors with junior yearling Welsh Ponderosa Kings Bobbi Jo.

Welsh's taking of all the top trophies marked the first time in the NAILE junior Brown Swiss show history that one exhibitor made a clean sweep of all the honors.

The Welsh's move toward Brown Swiss actually began back in 1974, when neighboring dairyman Paul Myers dispersed his dairy herd. Abigail not only became the first

(Turn to Page E26)



Welsh Ponderosa Titan Princess -- grand champion, best-bred and owned at NAILE junior show.



A little stall rest time is needed by both Farm Show entries and exhibitor, Mike Welsh.



Evaluating their Brown Swiss heifer herd for Farm Show entries are Mike and Emilie Welsh, R1 East Berlin.



With a collection of winning banners from past shows to be featured in Farm Show display, Mike Welsh packs gear for fitting his 4-H entries.