

Picking show winner

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son of Mr. and Mrs. Ardith Waltz of Manheim, showed this year's grand champion market steer, winning the heavy-weight class, as well.

A member of the Red Rose Beef Club, Waltz's other victories include reserve champion at last year's Farm Show, and grand champion honors at the Keystone International that same year. Also last year, the young cattleman took reserve champion junior yearling heifer honors at the Northeast Regional Preview Show in New Jersey, and showed the 1982 champion FFA steer at the Manheim Fair.

This year's show champion, aptly named Champ, came from Spring Meadows Ranch in Manheim. Although Waltz confesses that he likes the personal service accompanying a private transaction, he notes that many fine animals are available at club sales.

How does Jan go about picking a potential winner? First of all, he likes to go with an April calf, making his selection in September or October. Picking a younger calf is a little like buying "a pig in a poke".

"If you go much younger than six months," he cautions, "you really can't tell how they'll turn out."

On the subject of what qualities to look for, Jan asserts, "I like to see some thickness, along with a level rump. If a steer doesn't have a level rump as a calf, he never will."

"I also look for long, smooth muscles, a long body, smooth shoulders, and long cannon bones," he states, adding that prospective buyers should look to the animal's ancestry for clues to the steer's potential size.

One point Jan stresses is that you don't win at the Farm Show singlehandedly. "It takes a lot of parental support," Waltz acknowledges, "because it's hard to work cattle by yourself."

He also credits Cliff Orley of Keystone Cattle Service, county agent Chet Hughes, and former Lancaster livestock agent Max Smith, with giving him a good foundation in the cattle business.

Like Jan Waltz, 16-year-old Sue Falvey is quick to credit others for their behind-the-scenes help.

The Falvey's raise a 60-head flock of Dorset, Suffolk and Rambouillet cross sheep on their Bedford farm, and the young Farm Show winner thanks her parents, as well as her winning animal's breeder, Ronnie Miller, for helping in the selection of her grand champion market lamb.

A five-year veteran of the show ring, Sue's big win came during her second year at the Farm Show. Although her lamb was the only black animal in the market lamb class, Falvey doesn't feel that the distinctive color influenced the Judge's selection.

Sue selects for the "athletic" look, regardless of color. She does feel that heavier hind quarters are a good indication of a winner.

Falvey makes her selection in July or August and prefers a lamb born in late May. She stresses that spending the most money is not necessarily a shortcut to the championship, and the lamb must look good, regardless of price.

Unlike Jan and Sue, Juanita Kennedy won her grand championship with a home-grown entry. Miss Kennedy's Hampshire-Duroc cross was judged the best of the 200 market swine entered at the Farm Show.

Kennedy's other wins include grand champion showman and fitter at the 1982 Washington County Fair, as well as grand champion fitter again last year. She was also named grand champion showman and fitter at the 1982 West Alexander Fair.

Juanita credits her father, John D. Kennedy, a hog farmer for the past five years, with helping her to select her show pigs. She likes to make her selection between

September and November, and this year's winner was born August 24.

For those interested in going all the way in hog competition, Juanita recommends choosing a long pig with firm but not fatty hams.

Though Juanita pays little attention to color, she asserts that one of the most important qualities for a winning pig is leanness.

So that's what some of this year's winners have to say on the subject of choosing a champion-class animal. Though each competitor has his own set of criteria,

depending on the species to be shown, all agree that winning a grand championship requires a team effort. And all of the above winners will once again be in the thick of things come Farm Show

time next year. So if 1985 is going to be your year in the winner's circle, now is the time to lace up your boots. It's going to be a long, tough climb.

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