

# Sparkling crown, ready smile grace Pa. Dairy Princess

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CARMICHAELS — A sparkling crown, shiny banner and ready smile, on a lovely young lady promoting milk

That's the image Tammy Cree remembers so well from her visits to the Farm Show as a little girl. The Farm Show trip has always been an annual event for Bill and Lura Ann Cree, their daughter, Tammy, and son, Billy. It was there that Tammy first was awed by the young ladies representing dairy farmers.

"The Farm Show was the only place I had ever seen a dairy princess," says the personable and outgoing young woman who currently reigns over the Pennsylvania dairy industry.

"But I had no idea how to become one," she relates.

Not that Tammy Cree wasn't familiar with the dairy industry. From the time she was old enough to "do anything," Tammy has been an enthusiastic participant in dairy farming at Cree Acres, where the family tends a herd of 60 Holsteins 100 Hereford-Limousin beef cattle and over 300 acres of crops.

"They have these pictures of me as a little girl, in these big, green

boots," jokes the princess, about the family snapshots. Often, clad in those very boots, she played on a stack of feed sacks, while her mother taught the little girl songs during the evening milking.

When Tammy was about 12, the stanchion system was replaced with a milking parlor. Since the time she was "tall enough to reach the cows," from the pit, the bubbly brunette has been a regular on the family milking crew.

But farm chores never kept Tammy from an active, involved high school career. Her parents encouraged her to pursue as many activities as she wanted, including drum majorette, saxophone player in the band, president of the student council and honor society student.

Still, when the Washington-Greene county joint dairy princess pageant planners urged Tammy to be a contestant, she had few expectations of winning, but figured it would be a worthwhile experience for her. Besides, she could always run again the following year.

Thoughts of "next year" vanished with the placing of the crown on her head and suddenly Tammy Cree's summer calendar



Supermarket appearances give the friendly and outgoing Tammy a chance for one-on-one promotion chats with shoppers.

became inked full with dairy princess appearances.

By the September state princess pageant, she had become an experienced promoter and spokesperson. During her interview there, judges quizzed Tammy as to how, if chosen, she would combine princess appearances with her first year at Waynesburg College, where she had already begun her freshman studies.

On the spot, Tammy made a decision.

"I'd take a year off from school to be able to fulfill the duties of the job of Pennsylvania's dairy princess," she told them.

Excitement mounted that evening as Tammy was announced one of the three top skit winners for her performance as the coach of the "Real" team, and then selected as a finalist, prior to the announcement of her name as winner.

Her return trip to Carmichaels ended in a house filled with bouquets of roses from thrilled friends and relatives, and hugs from new classmates when she returned briefly to college to fulfill her personal promise to be a full-time princess.

Three days later, she boarded a plane for the first of what would become several flight experiences, as Tammy represented the state at dairy-related meetings, conventions, food fairs and media appearances.

Promoting became a bit painful when she returned to Harrisburg



This princess also reigns in the milking parlor, where she helps several days each week with the daily farm chores.

the week after her selection to take part in All-American cattle show activities. Staying with Bob and Mim Kauffman at Elizabethtown - her frequent home away from home - Tammy threw her back out while riding a three-wheeler cycle. The bright smile she beamed through that long week belied the ache that accompanied her stay as she limped through several days of awards presentations.

While the coordinators of the princess program generally accompany Tammy on her appearances, her mother was able to arrange time off from her position as a kindergarten teacher when Tammy recently made her first trip to New York City. The occasion was a foods fair, where Tammy represented the state's

dairy industry, along with other state's princesses, and last year's Miss America.

One particular flight stands out in her memory. Tammy's seat was a front one, facing the rest of the cabin, and air turbulence caused the ride to become rather bumpy. One elderly lady seated nearby, noticing Tammy's discomfort with the flight, reminded the princess that she didn't dare become ill because everyone could see her.

In February, Tammy went before a TV camera for the first time, delighting the "Starting Today" hosts with the Cinnamon-Buttermilk cookies and milk, that she had brought along for them to sample.

During another television spot,

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Tammy Cree and fresh cold milk: a plus pair for the Pennsylvania dairy industry.



Against the background of the Greene County rolling hills, the Cree family pauses for a family portrait. From left are Billy, Lura Ann, Tammy and Bill, Jr.

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