

Farm kids lighten work load with helping hands and laughter

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
Staff Correspondent

BERNVILLE — Throughout June Dairy Month, dairymen exert extra effort in promoting milk. Suburban and city folks are treated to mall promotions, dairy princess appearances, farm animal displays, and many milk, cheese and ice cream giveaways.

While dairymen agree that milk is THE product on a dairy farm, they also agree that their most valuable "products" are their offspring. In the flurry of getting things done on the farm, country youngsters are often overlooked. In many farm interviews, dairy displays, and even general discussions, the value of the extra pair of little hands or even just a smile, cannot be ignored.

A drive around the Bernville area in Berks County revealed some of these hardworking offspring who shared their feelings and views on farm life.

Locating a farm kid can be quite a task. It's hard to believe how busy they really are. Unlike many television addicts, they do not sit around. Among activities like feeding 4-H calves, milking cows, and attending Bible school and music lessons, they find time for swimming in the pond, riding on trucks and wagons and playing farm with their miniature tractors, wagons and animals.

The best time to catch them is during milking, on rainy days, or

on those rare occasions when they are just standing still. Where do they get their energy?

Farm kids Charlie and Krissi Zimmerman, the offspring of Charles and Linda Zimmerman, R1 Mohrsville, say they help their parents with the farm chores. Five-year-old Charlie says he and Krissi, 4, have a younger sister, Rachel, who is still a baby.

Charles and Linda Zimmerman farm over 700 acres and milk 70 Holsteins. Charles Jr. says that he will be ready to take over the farm when his dad gets old. Right now, he says he feeds the cows, calves and "fetches a 'chew' for dad."

Milk, he says, is his favorite part of the farm "cause it makes your bones grow." He explains that Krissi broke her arm earlier this year and the doctor told her to drink a lot of milk because "it makes your bones grow."

Their mother, Linda, says that the children are a big help when it comes to cleaning out the water cups in the barn - a task they enjoy.

Harvey Krull III, was a little harder to pin down than the Zimmerman kids. Nine-year-old Harvey is the son of Harvey and Cindy Krull of R1 Mohrsville. The Krills farm over 200 acres and milk 50 Holsteins along the Irish Creek Road on the way to Bernville.

Young Harvey with his seven-year-old sister, Allison, and three-year-old brother, Josh, enjoy



Jennifer, Mark and Michael Hix pose with their 4-H calves.

helping their parents on Krillstead Farm. But between chores, these siblings find time for attending Bible school, ball games, and visiting friends.

"I feed the calves and chickens, and rabbits," Harvey says, adding that he "sometimes" enjoys the



Tracey, Beth, and Lisa Phillips enjoy "helping" in the barn when their dad is milking. Their help consists of pushing feed down for the cows, their favorite job.



Harvey, Allison, and Josh Krill have charge of the calves at Krillstead Holstein Farm.



Krissi and Charlie Zimmerman are still too young to be much help to mom and dad, but practice with their toy farm equipment. Krissi and Charlie realize how important drinking their milk is however after Krissi broke her arm earlier this year and the doctor told her to drink milk, because "it makes your bones grow."

job. "I don't like wiping cows," he continues.

"Even his homework is better than wiping cows," his mother explains.

Harvey says that washing cows before milking takes too long. He prefers feeding the chickens and rabbits that he and his sister raise.

But mom says that "he's indispensable. He's tremendous," she adds, saying that when it is time to switch cows in the barn, Harvey's calm and quiet nature help to get the job done quickly and easily.

Harvey is also the resident calf feeder. He has charge of raising the calves on milk and is able to tell when they need medication and when they should be weaned.

His younger sister, Allison, is Harvey's assistant. Her main job is chasing the cows from pasture.

"They can see her coming and they know it's a pushover," she says. So Allison often takes Josh along, and later returns to solicit Harvey's help.

Harvey tells about the time Allison got stuck in the mud in the pasture and lost her sandals forever. "She was mad at the mud," he says with a laugh. And Josh, Harvey says matter of factly, "just gets in trouble."

Larry and Cathy Phillips of R1

Mohrsville also have three children, but they have all girls. With parents that had all boys, Phillips thought that he and his wife would have a good chance of producing a son. But with Tracey, age seven; Beth, age six; and Lisa, age three; they are not complaining. The three girls provide many opportunities for laughter and enjoyment when they "help" in the barn.

The Phillips milk 28 Holsteins and are currently on the diversion program. They farm 150 acres and are currently feeding pigs.

The older girls' favorite chore is pushing the feed down the chute for their father in the barn. They also give the cows hay, help mom feed the calves, and get very dirty.

Ice cream is a big favorite in their house and they say that mom gets "yelled at" if they run out of it.

Still young to take an active part in the farm chores, the girls shook their heads and wrinkled their noses when asked if they would enjoy more chores.

Being only eight years young does not stop Michael Hix from joining in the farm work. Michael's parents are John and Donna Hix, Bernville. John and Donna, along with John's father, Rae, and his

(Turn to Page B20)