

Pork producer

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lot of attention, causing volleyball games to stop and bystanders to move up close. Kent and Raelene work together, using very sharp knives to cut the meat into nice slices for sandwich making, or just eating. Raelene takes the ham portion and Kent takes the shoulder, and they work towards the center.

Once the first trays are put on the food table, the inquisitive onlookers slowly get in line, leaving Raelene and Kent to their work, carefully, but swiftly working over the carcass until there is nothing left but fat and bones. Kent says there is about 20 percent waste.

Kent and Raelene easily field questions as they work, and occasionally offer up a choice morsel, still steaming from the carcass. Raelene said the job goes faster now that they use insulated rubber gloves to work in the meat while slicing.

Raelene is a former Lancaster County Dairy Princess, and when Kent is asked if it was difficult to teach a dairy princess to carve pork, he said, "She was a good 4-H'er and learned by doing." Kent commented that they are probably improving the carving job, saying "I think we initially hacked up the carcass." Raelene adds, "We now get nicer slices."

They provide no other food with the meat, except occasionally baked beans. Raelene said they usually have the pig roast in conjunction with a covered dish picnic, so there's always plenty of food. "We eat good all summer long."

They will stuff the pig upon request, and then Raelene mixes up a traditional bread filling, puts it in a muslin sack, and places it in the cavity of the pig. As the pig roasts and turns, the juices drip over the stuffing. This, of course, prolongs the completion time of the pig. They have also stuffed the pigs with sauerkraut, but usually that does not have mass appeal, so they don't get many requests for it.

Raelene says one reason the roast pig tastes so good to people is that "It's so moist." The moistness comes because there is a large fat layer left on the pig than on roasts found in supermarkets.

When asked how often they eat pork, Raelene laughs and says, "All the time." Both she and Kent said they never tire of the flavor of their pig roasts, and they both agree that the only seasoning it takes is a little salt. Raelene said the leftovers are delicious heated in a microwave or made into pork barbecue.

Kent is sold on the virtues of pork, and he noted that the caloric content of a serving of pork has been lowered to under 200 calories per serving. "Hogs are definitely lower in fat than they used to be. Pork is being put on some diets

now." He mentioned that USDA is considering changing its grading system to be a more accurate reflection of what is actually being produced. "Producers will see the benefit of producing leaner hogs," he said about the proposed change.

So why is pork good for you? "It's a good source of proteins, B vitamins and phosphorus," Kent quickly replies. "And it is lower in cholesterol than the dark meat of chicken." He said that pork has gotten a lot of bad press because of the cholesterol problem, adding that he believes the issue is greatly misunderstood, especially among the medical profession.

Kent said he expects to see drastic changes in the pork industry in the next 10 years. "I would like to see pork producers become more involved in selling their products. We should have an interest in marketing our product."

Kent is presently president of the South Central Pork Producers and serves on the Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council. He is also president of his Sunday School Class at First United Methodist Church in Mechanicsburg, and he and Raelene are both involved in Christian clowning. Raelene is active in a new Farm women

group in Cumberland County. They have three children: Kyle, 6; Rebecca, 3; and Kurtis, 1.

The Strocks have a second roaster which they built to do boneless roasts, either beef or ham. It is a true oven, with racks which pull out, and three charcoal trays. It is on wheels, but is not yet mounted on a trailer. Occasionally they press both into service if the group is large.

They have held pig roasts for many company outings, graduation parties, church groups and wedding receptions. Any group gathering makes a good time to try the fun - and the taste - of a "scent-sational picnic."



A spit is driven through a shoulder bone and a leg bone, and prongs are used to hold the carcass in place as it slowly rotates. Here Kent tightens one set of prongs.

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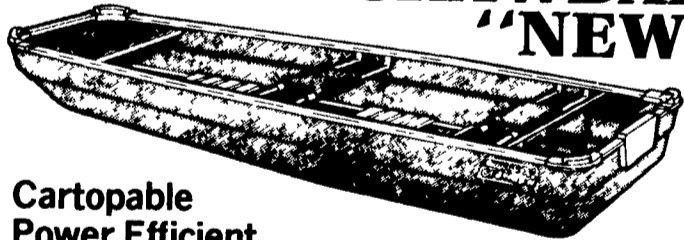
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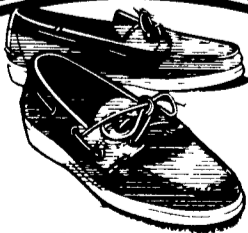
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