

# Youthful Charolais breeder is honored.

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS  
Staff Correspondent

OLEY — 4-H can mean many different things to many different youth. It can be an occasional meeting or contest or it can be a whole life project.

Kirk Fisher, 21 Oley, and his family have taken full advantage of what 4-H has to offer. It's their life and they enjoy it. The benefits and opportunities of the various programs in 4-H are very obvious at the Fisher homestead as well as in the Fisher brothers, Kirk, and Kent.

Kirk was recently chosen the 1984 Outstanding 4-H Boy in Berks County by the Agricultural and Horticultural Association of Berks County. He was honored at the Reading Fair Kick-off banquet and was featured this week at the fair showing his Charolais steers. To a young man who rents land and farms it to support his beef herd, and uses earnings towards feed costs and other project animals, this honor was very fitting.

"The education I have gotten in 4-H has given me a head start," Kirk states. "4-H is an experience I will never forget."

Kirk is involved in the Berks County Beef Club, The Berks County Swine Club, and the Oley Valley Saddlelites Horse Club. He and his younger brother, Kent,

rent and farm 30 acres with the help of their father, Steve, to raise feed for their 30-head registered Charolais herd, several goats, and several pigs. The two boys are kept busy throughout the year managing their animals and participating in hundreds of 4-H activities.

"It's kind of a team project," Mrs. Fisher says. "It has to be," Kirk adds. "4-H is really a family type thing," he says. "I don't know how we'd be able to do it if they (his parents) didn't support us."

What Kirk was referring to was the help needed from his parents to go to the 10 to 12 shows they take their Charolais to every year. Showing not only in Pennsylvania, but also in Ohio, New Jersey, Maryland, and New York, Kirk has garnered his share of Championships and showing and fitting honors with his Charolais steers. He was also selected the outstanding boy in the state in the livestock program by the Pennsylvania Livestock Association this year.

A beef club member for nine years, Kirk enjoys showing his steers and participating in livestock judging contests the best. "I'm still shooting for Chicago," he adds smiling. He is referring to the national achievement contest and has set his sights on that for the



Kirk and Kent Fisher, who prefer the Alpine and Nubian breeds, stand with their growing herd. Mrs. Fisher enjoys helping out with her sons' projects.

future.

Younger brother, Kent, is behind Kirk only by three years of age. "This is Kent's year," his mother says. Kent shows Charolais heifers since he really hates to part with a project steer after the year is over. He had Supreme Champion heifer in New Jersey, and was also the Champion Junior Fitter in Ohio. Kent also had the Champion beef animal at the York Fair with Kirk taking the reserve honors.

How's the competition between these two boys? "There was some," Kirk replies, but says, "now it's getting to be more OUR animals." The boys enjoy working together and use their joint resources to help each other out.

Kirk selects all the steers that they purchase to show. The steers are bought as calves from the Pennsylvania Charolais Association Feeder Steer Sale held each year. They like to select animals from Royal Charolais, Greensburg, or Bratton Charolais, McVeystown, because of the prominent bloodlines and growthy animals. Kirk can't really explain what he looks for in a calf but adds that he prefers not to buy those that are fitted for the sale. He prefers to evaluate them on their natural appearance and work with them at home.

At home, Kirk does much of the clipping and Kent assists with teaching to lead and other chores. "It's kind of a team project," Mrs. Fisher says about the preparation for a show.

Kirk prefers Charolais beef animals explaining "they make money for you faster. They're more efficient."



His first cow still remains one of the top mothers in Kirk Fisher's herd. She calves regularly every year.

With their cow herd increasing, they are able to raise and sell or show some of their own calves. One of these animals became the Champion Carcass Steer at a show in New York for Kirk recently. "It was the first calf that we raised out

of Kent's cow," Kirk explains.

The boys use artificial insemination on their heifers and cows. They like to utilize the Royal Charolais bulls to improve the bloodlines in their herd. "It's like it

(Turn to Page D14)



"Empress" is the favorite of Kent Fisher.



Extra goat milk is fed to swine herd by Kirk Fisher.



Holstein calf is in Fisher Charolais herd because one of cows lost her calf and had too much milk.