



Melissa Trostle, national Southdown queen.

York Co. teen is national Southdown queen

BY JOYCE BUPP
Staff Correspondent

RED LION — An essay written over two years ago has changed the life of York County 4-H'er Melissa Trostle.

And the Dallastown High School senior, who not long ago knew almost nothing of the sheep industry, is now the national Southdown queen.

Active in the work of the horse clubs, Melissa learned one day that the county's sheep and wool producers group was offering a top-bred project lamb to a deserving youth. Contestants were to write a paper on why they would be interested in becoming a shepherd and what they planned to do with the animal if chosen to receive, the ewe-chain award.

Although she had never owned a sheep, much less shown one, Melissa put her thoughts on paper and sent it to the contest. A few weeks later, the Ronald and Yvonne Trostle family of Red Lion R2, hauled home its first wooly houseguest.

"Buzz" soon lived up to her name, becoming as tame as a pet puppy, as she buzzed in and out of the house.

"Sheep are supposed to grow better in pairs, we were told," Melissa relates. "So I bought a market lamb and started it as another 4-H project. It helped Buzz understand that she was a sheep and not a housepet."

Melissa soon realized that sheep "fit" the limited barn and grazing space available on the family's small farm, and the compact Southdown's were of a size easily handled by a petite exhibitor like herself.

By the time the York Fair had ended that fall, with Melissa and Buzz claiming the breed championship ribbons, she was sold on sheep. A bred ewe, purchased at the Keystone sale, increased the flock with a ram and ewe lamb delivery. Others have swelled the ranks by birth and by purchase, with Melissa's flock now numbering nine ewes, two rams and one ewe lamb.

Six Hampshires also graze nearby, the initial members of this second breed added when Matt, the youngest Trostle, spied them at a dispersal and pleaded for a "sheep with a black face."

Last November, the Mid-Atlantic Southdown Breeders Association crowned Melissa their queen at banquet ceremonies held in conjunction with the Keystone International at Harrisburg. As first lady of the area, she represents members from Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, New Jersey and Delaware.

A second crown followed, when,



A proud Trostle family poses with their new national queen: parents Ronald and Yvonne, Melissa, Matt, and even Tramp who chose to join the portrait. Big brother Steve was absent, due to studies at Delaware Valley College.

in January, the York County sheep and wool producers chose this poised and pretty young lady as their own county commodity queen.

At many appearances, she was able to combine these two roles, representing the general sheep industry, along with Southdown breed. With her to these events go two tabletop displays offering promotional and educational material on the two areas that she represents.

Every time she attends an event as a representative of the sheep industry, Melissa wears wool garments. Curiosity by observers as to why she is dressed in wool, even in mid-summer, gives Melissa a chance to promote the unique insulating, quality of the natural fiber.

Among her official appearances, which often include handling out ribbons and congratulations in show rings, were the KILE show, Farm Show, Keystone show and sale in July at Carlisle, the Sussex County, New Jersey show, Maryland State Fair, Gaithersburg, Maryland, York Fair and, most recently, the York County Farm-City dinner.

Mid-Atlantic Southdown

breeders were pleased with the job Melissa had done representing them and asked her to remain for a second year as their queen. After handing out ribbons at the KILE show earlier this month, she packed her bags for the trip to national competition in Louisville, Ky.

Site of the Southdown queen contest was the North American International Livestock Exposition. Southdown breeders Maude and Mike Carpenter, of Jefferson, Md., invited Melissa to travel to the NAILE with them. During her stay, they and other Southdown breeders at the show lent her their enthusiastic support and took special pains to ensure that she had transportation and a chaperone for all events.

Competition began on Saturday evening, Nov. 10, with Melissa and contestants from Illinois, Oregon and Tennessee presenting prepared five-minute speeches on a sheep-related subject. "Southdowns and Youth, a great combination" was Melissa's presentation title, and it enabled her to promote the idea of the ewe chain methods of involving youth.

Personal interviews with two

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