

Dwayne Coble takes life's challenges in stride



Dwayne Coble, 13, readies "Cinnamon" for the steer competition at Farm Show last week. Scarcely more than two weeks after losing his arm in a farm-related accident, he was back in the barn working with his Farm Show prospect.

BY JACK HUBLEY

As with many young livestock exhibitors across the state, the Farm Show looms large in the life of 13-year-old 4-H'er Dwayne Coble.

And like most farm-raised boys, Dwayne has learned to accept more responsibility than most boys his age. On the family's 129-acre cattle and hog farm near Hershey, there's always work to be done, and Dwayne has proven himself equal to the task.

But the old adage about "all work and no play" holds true even for the most industrious of farm families—and especially for the younger family members with plenty of energy to burn after the chores are done.

Farm Show has always been an effective outlet for this energy. A kind of second holiday season where young exhibitors can showcase their ability to raise, fit and show quality livestock.

And Farm Show may well have been on the mind of young Dwayne Coble on the day after Thanksgiving while he tended to the task of spreading manure. With the tank spreader loaded, Dwayne turned to turn off the PTO when his sweatshirt became entangled in the PTO's knuckle.

Though his brother Dave came running from the barn immediately upon hearing Dwayne's cries for help, the damage had already been done. After spending 10 days at the Hershey Medical Center, Dwayne returned home without his right arm.

Under similar circumstances many people would have thrown in the towel, but the young farmer summarizes his ordeal with an understatement that forces the

listener to look twice. Did this young man lose his arm or merely sprain a wrist?

Scarcely five days after returning home from Hershey, Dwayne was already back in the routine of prepping his Farm Show prospect, a Charolais-Angus steer named Cinnamon.

"I worked with him every day up till the show. It was fun, but I had a couple of difficulties," he says matter-of-factly. "I wasn't really used to it right away."

Dwayne never considered dropping out of the running for the Farm Show, and his parents, Dave and Sylvia Coble, were prepared to back his decision all the way to the arena.

"At first he was afraid of being knocked down," recalls Dave, "but he's worked with the steer daily and even haltered him himself. I felt confident that he could do a good job."

Which is precisely what the young Coble did at this year's junior market steer show, less than two months after his debilitating accident. Leading Cinnamon into the large arena with the rope held in his left hand and extending across his chest, Dwayne campaigned the steer to a fifth-place win in the lightweight division.

The young exhibitor is taking other formidable tasks in stride as well.

"I can write with my left hand," points out the previous right-hander. "I picked it up right away." Farm work has also become a part of his daily regimen once again, with caring for the cattle and helping with the pigs included in his duties.

"I never thought of pitying myself," Dwayne says, adding that plenty of support from his

parents has made the adjustment period easier.

"He's had a lot of support from his schoolmates and church, too," says his father, pointing out that as many as 35 people visited him in one day during his hospital stay.

And this support was manifested again last Friday when a group of more than 65 businesses and private individuals, organized by Dauphin County Beef Club leader Jim Foreman, joined hands to drive the price of Dwaynes 1,080-pound steer to \$6.10 per pound.

Dwayne has already determined to channel part of his Farm Show earnings into next year's market steer prospect. The rest of the money will go into a savings account for his future education.

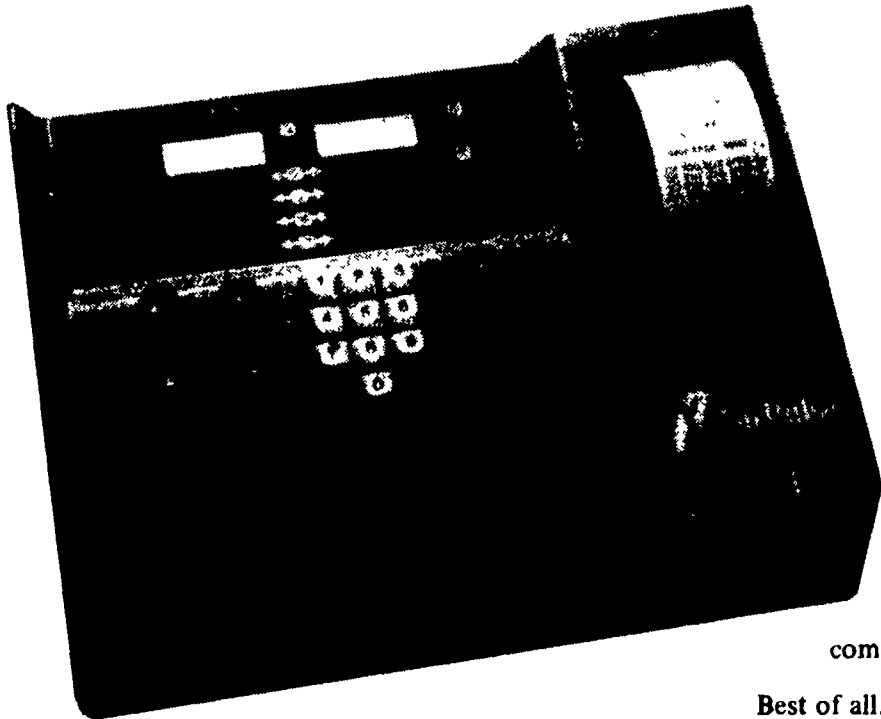
Dave Coble says that his son will be fitted for a prosthesis in the near future. Which should put this ambitious young man's goal of raising his own herd of purebred Angus heifers squarely within reach.

"He's accepted it now," concludes Dwayne's father. "We feel there's been a lot of answered prayers."

Farm Show '85 saw many a champion pass through its doors. But no one can dispute the fact that the grandest champion of them all was a young Dauphin County cattleman named Dwayne Coble.



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