

# Running keeps York farm couple fit, trim and healthy

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YORK — On a recent, warm, sunny afternoon over 600 runners gathered at the Host Farm near Lancaster. Their destination? A 13-mile course through the beautiful farm country around Strasburg, and the finish line with timing clocks at the end.

When the tally of runners was complete at the close of the 1985 Amish Half-Marathon, a York County dairy farm woman had taken the eighth-place overall, and second in her age category.

Rather impressive for someone who was "always the last kid chosen for teams in high school gym class." But that's what Anne

Grey remembers of her physical fitness level as a teenager.

A native of St. Joseph, Mo., this "city girl" is one of a family of eight children. In college, she met Martin Grey, also one of eight children, of a Hudson Valley, N.Y., dairy farm couple. After studies at the University of New York, he had headed west with a football scholarship to the University of Wyoming.

Grey is now manager of Sinking Springs Farm, York, and farm director for WSBA-radio.

By 6:15 a.m., Grey and his assistants have finished milking the farm's 70 registered Holsteins. Donning running shoes, he and Anne head out the wooded lane for



Running and farming can mix, as shown by the Anne and Marty Grey family. Two-year-old Laura is already a running enthusiast, as are daughters Alexis and Alison, who were in school during the photo session.



For Anne Grey the greatest reward of running is her feeling of fitness, and both physical and emotional well-being. Of the awards she has won, this one, from a race in which every competitor earned a trophy for participating, is her favorite.



No running without stretching first is the advice of Marty Grey. A tree in the farmhouse yard provides a handy spot for stretching calf muscles during a brief pre-run warmup session.

a morning run. They'll cover up to seven miles before they return for breakfast.

Both of the Greys are now competitive and hobby runners, and enthusiastic advocates of running as a way of maintaining body fitness and good health.

Grey took up running when he was 25. It continued his life-long interest in sports, which had included playing with an organized semi-pro football team.

"Heart disease ran rampant in my family. I took up running out of a fear of heart disease," he admits. "And I found that I really love it. I sleep better, have more energy at the end of the day, and have reduced my weight by about 20 pounds."

Anne, on the other hand, quickly jokes about her previous athletic activities.

"I had jogged off and on for years. And hated it. Any excuse, too hot or too cold, was handy. But Marty kept nagging me about my weight, and would almost push me out the door to go run. One year he even gave me running shoes for Christmas." She can laugh about it now, but recalls that she wasn't all that impressed at the time.

In 1982, after training for a couple miles each day, Anne decided to enter a race. Sponsored by the York YWCA, it was a five kilometer, or 3.1 mile, run, for women only.

"I figured I was really ready. So I got right up in the front of the pack. Pretty soon everyone had passed me. My time was horrible; I came in 82nd." Surprisingly, she found the experience to be great fun, and decided she wanted to do more.

Now, a vocal promoter of competitive running for women, Anne points out that this sport is the only one which takes an individual's age into account. As they grow older, runners naturally become a bit slower. Races break competitors into groupings by age, such as 30-34 years, 35-39 years, 40-49 years and 50 and over.

After the age of 30, few women run competitively, according to Anne. She cites one race in which an older female runner took part, finished last, and still won the competition in her age category.

Trophies, to Anne, serve only as a visual reward, while the real satisfaction lies in her improved emotional and physical well-being.

She sees farm women as having



"I go run, run, run!" calls Laura, whose short legs must work hard to keep up with her dad's long strides.

a decided advantage in running, since they can participate in this sport according to their own schedules, and train in the countryside, with fresh air and few traffic worries.

Grey echoes his wife's viewpoint about rural running.

"It really makes you appreciate the beauty of the farm, a beauty that's sometimes awe-inspiring. Plus, I find myself scouting the fields for weed or insect problems, things we might miss from the tractor seat," he says.

That's just one selling point for promoting running by farmers, a group increasingly under the same stresses as other segments of the population.

"Farmers as a group don't get as much exercise, especially of the aerobic type, as they once did,"

believes Grey. "Studies have shown that farmers are subject to stress ailments, such as high blood pressure, anxiety, obesity and depression."

"I have thought already that running and farming couldn't be compatible. There's always too much work, or I'm too tired to get out of the house, or our schedule is too demanding."

"Yes," teases his wife. "He says that every time I beat him in a race."

And she does beat him, mostly on long-distance runs. In any race over five K., Grey readily concedes that Anne can best him. While he considers himself more a sprinter, Anne shines in endurance runs.

Both agree that it takes a full measure of will power and determination to get into running on a regular basis.

"Running can be real drudgery in the beginning. You have to set goals. But most people simply won't love it at first," they'll admit.

Anne suggests that beginners start out walking, and only increase running as it feels comfortable. Just getting established in the routine of setting aside time each day to run is a psychological

## Homestead Notes