

Kitty Zackey is ready for fair season

BY BARBARA RADER
Staff Correspondent

RENFREW — July is one of the busiest months in the farmer's calendar. The men are busily baling the last load of hay or straw in anticipation of an evening at the county fair with their families.

And the women are hard at work in the kitchen, canning their best fruits and vegetables and baking goodies from time-honored recipes in anticipation of shiny blue ribbons.

For Kitty Rose Zackey of Lebanon, fair season is a fast-paced and exciting time. Each summer Kitty leaves her home in Lebanon and travels to Renfrew, where she stays with her mother. And during the months she spends here, Kitty will be busy until the last fair entry tag is properly attached and every item is entered in the right class, awaiting the judges' attentions.

This young mother of two daughters — Alexis, 2½, and Diana, 1, — has been going to the fair almost all her life, and this year is no exception. She is certified to teach French and English,

but hasn't taught lately because she's busy raising her daughters.

Now that fair season has arrived, Kitty spends much of her time preparing her entries for the Butler County Fair, held this week, and for the Butler Farm Show, which opens Aug. 4. Later in the season she will enter items in the Lawrence County Fair.

Although she has reduced the number of entries since her children were born, she still finds time to enter quite a few homemade items.

This year she's entered one quilt, and numerous jars of fruits, vegetables, pickles, jams and jellies. Fresh vegetables, fruits, flowers and her favorite recipes of homemade fudge and baked goods are also out on top.

She makes her baked entries from family recipes she learned to prepare at an early age. An old fashioned ginger cookie made from her grandmother's favorite recipe is one of her favorite entries.

"Sometimes they win and sometimes not; it depends on the judge and the humidity," she



Kitty is one step ahead of the other exhibitors as she ties her entry tags on all the canned goods she will enter in the Butler County Fair.

notes. "I really make the cookie only about twice a year," she confessed. "Once at Christmas and the other for the fair."

Nuts and raisins are the only decorations on the ginger cookies, "since that's how I remember my grandmother doing it," she adds. She says she doesn't make the cookie often because it is so time consuming, but she does make plenty of other varieties throughout the year.

Kitty also has her own red raspberry bushes, blueberry bushes and grapes, which keep her busy making jars of jellies and jams that always top the canned goods competition at the fair.

Three acres are devoted to her two sets of fruit orchards. One is a young set of trees just getting started, but the other two acres are planted into a prosperous garden. The garden and dwelling are surrounded by flowers and her mother keeps bees.

Kitty's mother collects the honey using both modern and old fashioned techniques and entered the honey in the fair for the first time last year.

Kitty makes a special fruit pie using cherries, apples, peaches and pears from their orchard, but because the pie is displayed at the fair and doesn't get eaten, she considers it a waste to enter it.

Kitty names several reasons for putting so much effort into her fair entries. "I love the fair," she says. "The whole idea of anybody entering free, showing their handiwork, the fruits of their gardens, their animals, their crops. People are so excited to see a ribbon on their carefully prepared work. And the prize money adds up too," she adds.

"It gives a terrific feeling of satisfaction to be rewarded for



Kitty prepares her grandmother's old fashioned ginger cookies to enter in the Butler County Fair. She makes this cookie every year and has varying success at the fairs.



Kitty's little helper, daughter Lexi, helps her cut out the ginger cookies. There's no better way for her to learn to make prize-winning cookies than from her mom!

something we do anyway, like canning vegetables or picking flowers," she continues. "It makes me feel like the gardening and pickling and sewing are being recognized as worthwhile activities."

Kitty often reaps rewards in the form of ribbons and prize money for her entries. She wins most often with her raspberry jam and jelly, bread and butter pickles and quilts.

Since moving to the Lebanon area, Kitty has entered a quilt for the past four years in the Pennsylvania Farm Show, taking a first, two seconds and a third place.

A Rosey Wedding quilt she made

for her brother took first place in the 1983 Farm Show.

This year, she received a second place on a blue quilt she designed, combining the log cabin and stars. The quilt was later accepted at a National Quilt Show held in April at Paducah, Ky., and then was photographed for a "Quilt Art 1987 Calendar" to be published nationwide.

Kitty's older sister led the way for Kitty to start quilting eleven years ago. After reading many books and making some quilts she describes as "really ugly," Kitty got better at her craft. She now uses some of her quilts, but gives most of them away as gifts. She

(Turn to Page B4)



Kitty and her family display some of the quilts Kitty has made. From left are Kitty with daughters Diana and Alexis, and her husband, Leslie.

Homestead Notes