

Melanie Bow inspires others with her enthusiasm

BY DONNA McCONAUGHEY
Staff Correspondent

LEBANON — Paving the way, setting the pace, trying something new. That is what Melanie Bow's 4-H involvement has meant to her.

Whether or not she wanted it that way is debatable, but Melanie has never backed down from a challenge. She is a very independent hard-working "go-getter."

Melanie has been involved in a variety of 4-H projects and activities. Her primary emphasis has been on her sheep project. Melanie currently has a flock of Suffolk sheep which she shows in county, state, and national shows.

Melanie grew up on a Lebanon County farm which included a flock of sheep. However, Melanie introduced Suffolks to the flock. Although she has been working with sheep since she was old enough to go to the barn, her parents credit Melanie herself with the expertise she has developed.

Melanie's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bow, hold a philosophy of letting the kids do their own work. Thus Melanie has learned how to manage, sell, fit and show sheep on her own from the very beginning.

Melanie has slowly and painstakingly made her place in the Suffolk sheep breed. This has included many years of hard work. She has learned a lot of things the hard way but has always tried to learn from her mistakes.

One of the highlights of Melanie's 4-H career was exhibiting the grand champion at the Lebanon County Fair in 1984. Melanie had always dreamed of winning the show with a homebred lamb. That year she placed the goal before her and did everything possible to succeed.

Much time was required in addition to selecting a lamb from her spring lamb crop that had the genetic potential to go all the way. Melanie took her lambs on daily walks, managed their feeding

program carefully, and even devised specific exercises to strengthen the lower leg muscles on her lamb. The end result was just what she had hoped for.

In addition, Melanie took her goal one step further and showed her lamb at the Farm Show. This proved to be another challenge as she readjusted the feeding and exercise program. She worked daily to be sure the right amount of finish would be on her lamb, and even worked with a professional fitter to improve her trimming techniques for the more difficult show. Again her hard work paid off when she placed second in her class.

Melanie has never been one to take the easy way out. In fact, she will accept many challenges. She is now beginning to reap the benefits of her 4-H work in a more general way. Melanie is the 1985 Pennsylvania 4-H Sheep Winner.

This award and the Outstanding Pennsylvania 4-H Livestock Producer Award, which she will receive later this year, represent firsts for Lebanon County. Melanie is only the third Lebanon County 4-H'er to win a state 4-H award in any aspect of agriculture.

By being first to lead the way, Melanie is setting an example for other Lebanon County 4-H'ers to follow. She is also encouraging them to do as she has done. Melanie is able to convince them that the rewards are worth the investment.

Melanie is not afraid to be first, to try something new, to set high standards. By doing this she inspires others to do the same.



Melanie Bow's sheep projects have been an important part of her 4-H experience.



Heather Hernley's Ayrshire herd now consists of 17 head, several of which have claimed state awards.

Outstanding Ayrshire Girl plans to encourage others

BY DONNA McCONAUGHEY
Staff Correspondent

LEBANON — "It's really neat, not everyone knows how it feels." That is Heather Hernley's description of what it is like to be involved in the 4-H dairy program.

Heather is an Ayrshire breeder from northern Lebanon County. She has been awarded many honors in both 4-H and FFA but one of the most important has been the Outstanding Pennsylvania Ayrshire Girl award. Heather has

received this honor twice and has placed second in national competition.

Currently finishing her last year in 4-H, Heather has exhibited many champions at county, district, and state shows. Her winnings have included the champion at the Farm Show and a second place at the All-American in a class of 32 junior calves.

Heather brought the first Ayrshire into her father's Holstein herd. Eventually their herd has

become integrated as a result of 4-H and FFA projects. Currently, she owns 17 registered Ayrshires and is very active on the family farm.

In addition to claiming awards on the tanbark, Heather's herd has won state butterfat and production awards. She has received other honors in FFA for Proficiency and Dairy Herd Project Books, has held a state office and received the Keystone Farmer Degree.

Heather proves her ability in all-around dairy knowledge by competing in dairy bowl competition all the way to the national level.

As Heather reflects on her 4-H experience, she is quick to credit her family with giving her support throughout the years.

Her father has been a 4-H leader for 19 years and her mother undertakes the critical task of "holding down the fort when we are showing."

"As I look back over the years there were times when I know funds were low, yet somehow my parents found what was necessary for me to continue to move along. I don't know where it came from," notes Heather. That determination and encouragement by the whole family has given Heather the support to excel in the dairy industry.

Heather also praises the Pennsylvania Ayrshire Breeders Association for pushing her along. They have encouraged her to move beyond the county and state levels to national competition.

As she faces the end of her last year in 4-H, Heather looks to the future. She also hopes to remain involved in 4-H by serving in a leadership role.

"Now-a-days everyone is waiting to be asked to do something—why not just volunteer. The Lord gave me this experience to use—not just forget." She plans to encourage others as she was encouraged.

4-H judging experience leads Don Welk into dairy career

BY SALLY BAIR
Staff Correspondent

STRASBURG — For Don Welk, Jr. the seven years he spent as a 4-H member in Lancaster County have offered a good learning experience. "I gained a lot of different ideas," he says.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Welk, R2 Strasburg, Don says he joined 4-H because the family buys and sells registered Holsteins, and he was interested in showing. Furthermore, his grandfather was a 4-H leader, so it seemed natural for him to become a member.

He remembers that he had the good fortune of being able to take his first 4-H calf all the way to the All-American Dairy Show in Harrisburg. "I had a pretty good calf and did well at the local and district shows." However, he was third from the bottom at the huge show, but says it didn't discourage him. He was simply proud to have gone so far.

Don is still going to the All-American Dairy Show, and this year had the privilege of participating in the judging contest. Don was a member of the 4-H dairy team from Lancaster County which placed first in the state. The team was second at Harrisburg, out of 16 national teams, and Don

was 15th high individual, as well as second in the Jersey breed.

Last year he judged in the same show as a member of the FFA team, and they placed second in that national contest.

Judging has been a valuable part of his 4-H experience. Don says, "In practicing for the judging team I got to see more cattle. It helped me gain leadership by learning public speaking in giving oral reasons. We started in May and practiced once a week until August, so we saw a lot of cows."

Don says he has owned about 12 cows throughout his 4-H career, although now he owns only eight. He leases a few of the cows to farmers, and through this practice, he has made some money on his projects.

Although he enjoys showing, he says there are times when he wonders if the hard work is worth it. But when he does well, he says he can see that it is.

A member of the Lancaster County Dairy Club, he has served as president, vice-president, secretary and game leader. He also served on County Council and was its treasurer for two years. Because of his good records on the blue form, he earned a scholarship provided by the Lancaster County Bankers Association.

4-H helped Don decide to study dairy production in college. Now a freshman at the York Campus of Penn State, Don is looking forward to studying at main campus. "I would like to have a milking herd of Registered Holsteins," he notes.

He hopes having a herd is in his future, but says if that doesn't work out he will go into an ag-related field. He believes the future of agriculture will be good, but adds that the skills and con-

(Turn to Page 6)



4-H has helped Don Welk decide to pursue a career in dairy production.