

Dauphin, Lancaster Counties swap steer titles

BY JACK HUBLEY

HARRISBURG — For two years now, the race for grand champion steer honors has boiled down to head-to-head competition between two families.

Last year, Lancaster County's Kelly Rohrer edged out Sally Messick of Dauphin County for the top beef title. But this year Sally's brother Mike was back with a Messick-bred entry that proved to be too much even for Rohrer's heavyweight.

The son of Mylin and Doris Messick of Middletown, Mike caught judge Dan Eversole's eye with a heavyweight Chianina-Angus cross he called Andy.

"He was one of the thickest and squarest rumped steers I'd seen all day," remarked Eversole, adding that the 1,280-pound steer had the edge over Rohrer's reserve champion because of his movement and structural correctness.

Mike Messick's assessment of his steer was a bit more modest. "I knew he was good, but I didn't think he'd ever get this far," he beamed.

But Messick must have suspected that he'd be in the running by the conclusion of last year's show season. The Lower Dauphin High School 10th-grader walked Andy to grand championship honors in both the Keystone International Livestock Expo and the Northeast Chianina Field Day. In fact, the only time the steer failed to shoulder out the

competition was during the Dauphin County Roundup when he was stonewalled after placing first in his class.

A homebred entry, Andy was sired by Ideal, one of Messick Farms' Chianina bulls kept on hand to breed the family's 100 Angus brood cows. Mike did his part through daily fitting practice and half-mile walks every other day.

Messick plans to bank his earnings from the sale of his champion. Hopefully Andy will contribute to a bachelor's degree in Animal Science at Penn State.

Whatever magic Manheim's Kelly Rohrer summoned up to win grand champion honors last year was nearly as potent this year.

"It's the red shirt," laughed the 18-year-old daughter of Yvonne Rohrer, who pointed out that a red shirt played a part in last year's win.

"We had anticipated not placing well (this year) because of his height," Rohrer said, adding that the lanky, Chianina-Angus crossbred named Ebony might have even looked better had he been finished out to 1,500 pounds, rather than his 1,320-pound show weight.

Magic notwithstanding, Wayne and Jeff Miller of Indiana undoubtedly played a part in the outcome. Wayne bred Rohrer's 1985 and '86 winners, and his son Jeff made the trip from Indiana to clip Ebony for the show. The clipping alone made a big dif-



After watching his sister take reserve honors last year, Mike Messick, Middletown, did her one better, taking home the grand champion banner, held here by Secretary of Agriculture Richard Grubb.

ference in the steer's appearance, according to Rohrer.

One other person who figures heavily in the success of Kelly's steer projects is her Uncle, Abe Flory, of Lititz, who houses her animals on his small farm. "He's helped me even more this year than any other," said Rohrer.

Other divisional champions included Leigh Hitz, daughter of Lee and Eileen Hitz of Lebanon, who showed the middleweight champion. The lightweight champion was shown by Dwayne Coble, son of David and Sylvia Coble, Hershey.

Following are the results of the steer show and showmanship competition.

- Steers**
Lightweight 1
 1 Jenni Druck 2 Gretchen Christman 3 Matthew Will
Lightweight 2
 1 Derek Nissley 2 Greg Zook 3 Stacey Linton
Lightweight 3
 1 Dwayne Coble 2 Nichole High 3 Michelle Nissley
Lightweight Champion
 Dwayne Coble Dauphin
Reserve Lightweight
 Nicole High Lancaster
Middle Weight 1
 1 Michelle Dean 2 Todd Lilley 3 Kent Fisher
Middle Weight 2
 1 Kerri Kohr 2 Barbie Davis 3 Emily Weaver



Dwayne Coble, (at halter) Hershey, exhibited the champion lightweight steer. Assisting with plaque is Dwayne Messick.



The price of fame: The spotlight shone on Mike Messick (right) as the exhibitor of the grand champion steer fielded questions from an army of television and newspaper reporters.



Champion middleweight honors went to Leigh Hitz of Lebanon.

- Middle Weight 3**
 1 Leigh Hitz 2 John McKnotch 3 Jodie Weaver
Middle Weight Champion
 Leigh Hitz Lebanon
Reserve Middle Weight
 Michelle Dean
Heavy Weight 2
 1 Angie Longenecker 2 Gregory Wilson 3 Darby Smith
Heavy Weight 2
 1 Mike Messick 2 Sally Messick 3 John Eaton
Heavy Weight 3
 1 Kelly Rohrer 2 Mike Grossan 3 Eric Berkeimer
Heavy Weight Champion
 Mike Messick Dauphin
Reserve Heavy Weight
 Kelly Rohrer Lancaster
Grand Champion Steer
 Michael Messick Dauphin
Reserve Grand Champion
 Kelly Rohrer Lancaster
Showmanship
11 & Under
 1 Leigh Hitz 2 Jennifer Calderazzo 3 Heidi Frey
12-14
 1 Carla Cutter 2 Cathy Shive 3 Sue Eisenhour
15 & Over
 1 Jan Waltz 2 Don Cairns 3 Dwayne Messick



Kelly Rohrer, exhibitor of the reserve grand champion steer, shares the magic moment with her uncle, Abe Flory.

