

West Virginia's Dairy Princess Promotes The Dairy Industry

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West Virginia Correspondent

SUMMIT POINT, W. Va. — Whether she's promoting dairy products in a shopping mall, being part of the national FFA dairy judging team or milking in the evening at her family's farm in Jefferson County, West Virginia's 1985-86 Dairy Princess Loretta Bane likes to be in the thick of things.

Since winning the title last August, 19-year-old Loretta has added public appearances to promote dairy products to her already busy schedule. Recently, she participated in a mall milk giveaway at Meadowbrook Mall near Bridgeport. While there, she talked about why she thinks it's important to promote the dairy industry.

That's (dairying) how I make my living, and how my dad makes his living," Loretta explains. Her father and his twin brother own and operate Ban-Harman Farm, a 750-acre dairy in Summit Point, near Charlestown. Loretta works on the farm along with her mother,

brother and sister-in-law. A sister works on a nearby Ayrshire farm.

Loretta owns six cows and six heifers; Ban-Harman Farm, a Holstein operation, milks between 250 and 300 head, with 300 replacement heifers. They grow and mix all their own feed, with the exception of molasses used.

The Banes also farm 1,200 to 1,300 acres in addition to the land they own. They've been in business for over 40 years. "Since my dad was about 4 years old," Loretta explained.

Loretta has been assisting with the evening milking regularly since she was 15 years old. A member of the Junior Holstein Association, she has also been active in 4-H and FFA.

She and her brother John, and her sister Lori have each won Over-All FFA Grand Champion Showman at the West Virginia Black and White Show. Loretta has attended the 4-H Congress in Washington, D.C., for dairy and has competed as a member of the National FFA Dairy Judging

Team. To qualify for nationals, Loretta placed first in state competition.

Loretta graduated from Jefferson High School June 12 and plans to attend Shepherd College in Shepherdstown to major in business.

Although the job of dairy princess involves a heavy load of travel, speech making and milk pouring, Loretta says she entered because, "I thought I could do a

good job of letting people know dairy is important."

Mindful of the present buyout situation in the dairy industry, Loretta has these comments on the issue and how it has affected those in her area. "In a way it (the buyout program) is good, and in a way, it's not," she said. "Over half

of the dairy farms in my county are going out. Of the 35 farms we have, I think we'll lose about 15 of them."

The situation worries Loretta a little. "The bigger farms are going to get bigger and the smaller farms aren't going to be missed," she said.

Farm Fair Measure

Senator Noah Wenger announced that the Senate has unanimously approved a measure he has sponsored which establishes a separate law for the operation and administration of Pennsylvania's agricultural fairs.

"Currently, county agricultural fairs and funding for these events are controlled under the Harness Racing Act," explained Wenger. "Because of this, modifying fair operations and making funding changes have been difficult. Amendments containing much-needed modifications for fairs are often bogged down with controversial horse racing reforms which hinder passage and delay changes."

Wenger's bill would provide Pennsylvania fairs with a more clearly defined funding procedure and eligibility requirements. Today, fairs are supported through the Fair Fund which reimburses local fair organizations for operating expenses. The fund is contained in the state's General Fund Budget. This year, more than \$2.75 million will be granted to community agricultural fairs across the state.

Fair Fund monies are distributed through grants according to the size of the fair, the largest grant being \$12,000. Under Wenger's bill, maximum grants will be increased to \$14,000. Also, grants will be made available to statewide agricultural organizations which contribute to the development of agriculture or agribusiness.

The measure also establishes an advisory committee to periodically review fair operations and make recommendations on the disbursement of funds. The seven-member committee will consist of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Chairman of the Senate and House Agriculture and Rural Affairs committees, three representatives of agricultural fairs and a member of the public.

"Pennsylvania fairs provide a showcase for Pennsylvania's agricultural community while at the same time offering wholesome family entertainment," said Wenger. "The enactment of the Fair Bill will ensure that these events remain an important tradition."

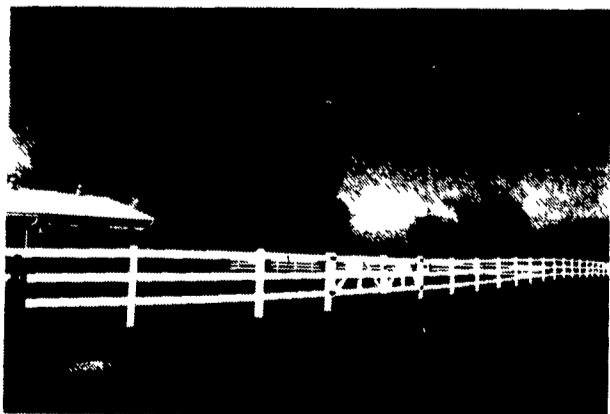
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