

Fitting and Showmanship Skills Sharpened at Field Day

BY SANDRA MOSER
Special Correspondent

OLEY — Thirty-four Berks county youth got a head start down the tanbark trail recently, when the county Junior Holstein Club hosted its annual Field Day at the farm of Ronald and Barbara Richard, Oley.

The day began at 8:30 a.m., when eight seniors, aged fifteen and over, were grouped with three younger members between the ages of eight and fourteen. Groups then grabbed a halter and attempted to catch one of the Oleka Farm calves. "All the calves were under eight months," said Barbara

Richard, "but none of them were tame."

After catching a heifer, juniors began their bovine makeovers. Calves and participating juniors were washed several times using a tanker from the Oley Valley Fire Company. "We didn't want our well to run dry," laughed Barbara Richard.

Calves were also clipped and brushed and taught to lead before the 1 p.m. show. "I haven't really started working on my heifer for the fair," said 11-year-old Todd Rabenold. "But I will now. It's too much work getting the heifers ready at the last minute."

"It was hard work," added 10-year-old Larry Ritter. Heifers were as tired as the juniors, as white flanks and knees got dirty again moments before the fitting competition. "My calf keeps falling asleep," complained one girl, pulling on the halter of her exhausted four-legged partner.

The event was open to all county youths. Juniors owning breeds other than Holsteins attended, and several 4-H clubs were represented.

Steve Shaw, graduate of Penn State and Oley Valley resident, officiated. "It's a good program," explained Bernice Hoch. "It gives the kids a dry run, and a chance to straighten out their mistakes before the real shows."

"I'm glad it could be at my place," said Ronald Richard. "The kids get the animals looking super and I've been told the heifers will be much tamer when they come to milk."

Show winners were: Team fitting placings, 1. Dave Bittler, Amy Kohler, Brooke Meyers, Dean Wagner; 2. William Leshner, Daryl Hoch, Jenny Rabenold; and 3. Kevin Schlegel, Jason Balthaser, Denise Hoch, Chris Rittle.

Showmanship: Ages 8, 9, 10; 1. Brandy Moser, 2. Sandy Gross, and 3. Larry Ritter. Ages 11 and 12; 1. Dean Kohler, 2. Amy Richard and 3. Dean Wagner. Ages 13 and 14; 1. Scott Youse, 2. Duane Stump and 3. Denise Hoch.



Steve Shaw was the official judge for the fitting and showmanship contest held at the end of the day where the youths demonstrated skills they learned earlier.



Participants in Berks County's field day encountered an unexpected game of tug of war while sharpening their showmanship skills.



During Berks County's recent field day, held at the Ronald and Barbara Richard Farm in Oley, senior participants were grouped with three junior participants. Dave Bittler explains some of the finer points of fitting to Brooke Meyer, Amy Kohler and Dean Wagner.



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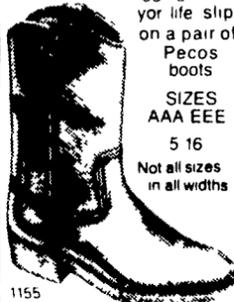
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