

Gring's Mill Hosts First Berks Co. Dairy Festival

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
AND SANDY MOSER

READING — A first-ever, Berks County Dairy Festival was held last Sunday at the Gring's Mill Recreation Area, Reading. If the crowd was any indication of success, milk promotion received a big boost with the help of the contests, entertainment, and food advertising the merits of milk to the estimated crowd of 3,000 people.

Advertised as "free family fun," the dairy festival drew a growing crowd of families to see and participate in the ice cream eating, milk drinking, tubing, cow milking and milk carton boat racing contests.

"Undoubtedly the boat races were one of the biggest attractions

of the day," said event co-ordinator Phoebe Bitler of Fleetwood. Billed as one of the first milk carton boat races in the state, twelve entries representing county 4-H clubs, FFA chapters, granges, private farms, area industry and local churches participated.

Cash awards were given to the most attractive, high carton count, and the largest crew to stay afloat.

Claiming first place in the appearance category was Noah's Ark, the entry sponsored by Hopewell Mennonite Church in Reading. The boat was made using 315 cartons, sported cardboard bears and giraffes, and was manned by a sandalled and bearded Noah.

Second place went to the entry of Eastern Berks 4-H Dairy Club,

Leader Jerry Krone, front, and Jimmy Wagner guide their Eastern Berks 4-H Dairy Club entry to the second place for most attractive boat and first place for highest crew count with 20 people.

The Western Berks 4-H Dairy Club milk carton boat entry, the Milky Whey, was the award winner for the high milk carton count with a total of 692 cartons.



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Congo Cruiser, that also has the high crew count with 20 people. The Cruiser was complete with tropical flowers, camouflage spray paint, and a stuffed snake and monkey. Crew members dressed in bale-string 'grass' skirts, tied-on coconuts and a traditional feedbag loin cloth.

"We had to name this boat the Congo Cruiser II because the first one sank," said Linda Snyder whose children helped redesign and repair the entry. A total of 431 milk cartons were used in the final boat, including two blue and pink pints dangling from the earlobes of boat captain Jerry Krone.

Meow for Milk, the 282 carton Northern Berks 4-H entry, was awarded third place.

The U.S.S. Milky Whey, with a contest high 692 cartons, represented the Western Berks 4-H Club and was designed by Karen Vale, a local art teacher. Club member Doris Stump was optimistic prior to the contest. "We stuck it in the water for the first time last week. It floats. It did then anyway," Stump said.

Kutztown FFA proved to have the fastest boat as it covered the

400-foot distance in 1 minute, 39.9 seconds.

In other contests Joanne Ruth, Fleetwood, dominated the dairy foods competition, winning the salad, main course and best of show ribbons. Barbara Jo McCulley, Bowers, received the nod for her appetizer/beverage and dessert entries, while Grace Seidel, Womelsdorf, topped the soup division. All dishes involved

the use of real dairy products.

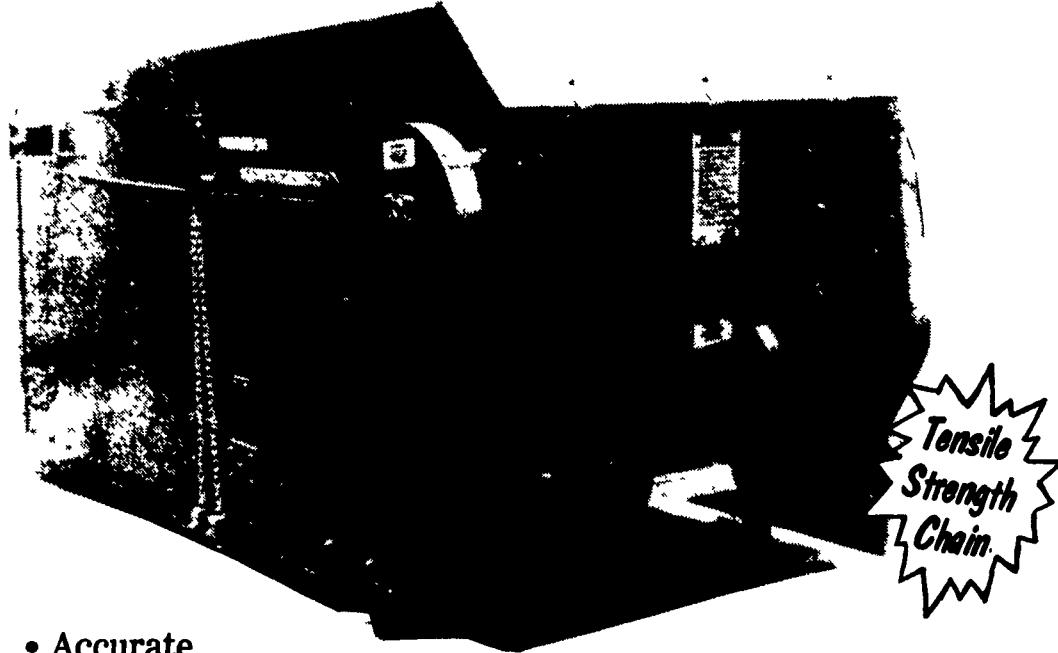
The day's final contest was a milking competition which was won by the team of John Riegel, a feed salesman. "I told my team to get all the milk you can in the shortest amount of time you can," said Riegel. His team included Reading's mayor Karen Miller, Berks County Dairy Princess Carol Kurtz, and John McClellan, a novice volunteer from the audience.



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