

Pre-Law Student Wins Top Chianina Awards

EAST BERLIN — Slender twenty year-old Karen Brothers is not the typical pre-law student. While her Franklin and Marshall classmates spend their weekends partying and socializing, Karen trains her Chianina bulls for nationwide competition.

And this August, she maneuvered a trucking rig filled with four prize-winning bulls to South Dakota. There, Karen was named both 1987 national Junior Chianina Herdsman and first runner-up National Chianina Queen.

Karen started showing the family's full-blood bulls when she was 14 years-old. "Before that," Karen said, "I watched one show competition, and right away I knew I wanted to show instead of watch."

Her first show competition was a shoo-in, Karen admits. "I showed a full-blood heifer and won the \$500 division prize because nobody else showed." It was a great way to start and give her incentive to keep it up.

Since 1981, Karen has amassed enough ribbons to fill two walls of their A-frame East Berlin home. Her parents Carl, an oral surgeon, and his wife Margie find equal satisfaction in working with the herd. Their Adams County home borders Lake Meade and is located

about 1/2 mile from their 120 acre Lake View Farm with its 65 head of Chianina.

Karen boasts that the Chianina breed which is the largest and leanest breed in the world is a gentle bunch who are docile and nice. "If you treat them nice, they're nice to you," she said.

After garnering numerous grand champion awards at small fairs, Karen graduated to the bull showing the following year. "Bulls," she claims, "are easier to work with since they aren't as moody." She said she begins to halter break the bulls before they are weaned.

During training, Karen follows an obstacle course that she has set up to imitate the obstacle courses that national shows require. This includes walking them over railroad ties, through water and rough terrain. Part of South Dakota's national competition required them to load their bulls in a trailer. "My bull had just traveled 35 hours in a trailer and he was not about to enter one again," Karen said, "so we didn't win that one."

To encourage hair growth on her bulls, Karen said they keep fans on them in the barns and rinse them to keep them cold. Weekly she washes, blow dries and clips their hair to get them accustomed to her

touch.

Her favorite 5 year-old bull likes her pampering. "When I hose him down and shampoo him," Karen said, "He leans his head to the side, closes his eyes and practically drools with joy."

The Brothers' firm slaughters badly disposition bulls because that is usually passed down to the next generation. "It would be embarrassing," Karen said, "to go to a show and have them act up. It would give their breed a bad name."

The Brothers keep record of each bull's growth, disposition and feed consumption with a computerized bull test center.

Even if Karen and her bulls do everything right in the show ring, "if the judge doesn't like your bull, you don't have a chance." Karen recalls that one partial judge stated that he doesn't like white." Karen said the Chianina pure bloods are always white, "but some judges have an optical illusion that black is better."

Obviously, Karen does not agree. She thinks her bulls which stand 6'6" at the shoulders and weigh over 1,400 pounds not only are superior in looks but also in taste. "Chianina is lean beef. It has 35% less calories than either



Two walls of Karen's trophies fill the Brothers' A-frame home.



Margie Brothers, Karen's mother often cares for the bulls while Karen attends college.



Karen claims, "Chianina cattle are really docile even if they are the largest breed."



Karen steered this rig to South Dakota. She asks, "Why pay someone else to do it when I can do it myself?"

chicken or turkey." She pulls out brochures that compare Chianina's calories, cholesterol and fat content with other meats to prove that beef rates lowest in every category.

At present, the Brothers believe that Chianina beef is usually processed by a Texas firm that sells under the name "Key Lite Beef." Karen believe the beef's largest market is the military, because "the military is interested in fitness."

This is Karen's senior year at F&M, the Lancaster college where she is majoring in accounting in preparation for becoming a tax attorney. Although busy with her cattle business, she manages to maintain an A to B+ grade average. She affirms that sometimes it is difficult to concentrate on her studies when she knows there is a problem with the herd. She said, "My life is mainly college and the farm. I spend about equal time at both places."

Sadly she admits that when she enters Yale, Harvard or one of the other top ten law schools, she will need to concentrate on her studies since that is her career and she will not come home every weekend like she has throughout college.

"But," she insists, "I plan to have a farm someday or at least be involved with it in some way." She paused, then added, "I think big. I plan to go out west and have lots and lots of land and lots of cattle."

During numerous trips, Karen said they hit a lot of shows and won the top awards. "But you can't take cattle on too many trips or they slim down."

Much of her showing is publicity for their Lake View Farms which boasts the finest herd of full blood Chianina in the Northeast.

For many months, Karen planned and scouted out ways to transport the four head to the American Junior Chianina Associ-

ation National Junior Heifer Show. Finally, she chose a 1981 Mercedes truck with a 32 foot trailer. Karen convinced her mom and a friend Jamie Kohr, who shows cattle, to join her in getting their truck driver's permits and head west. She reasoned, "Why pay someone else to do what we can do?" She believes that "no one else can possibly care as much about your own animals or be as competent."

Among the three drivers, they drove straight to Rapid City, South Dakota in 35 hours. Karen admits that she did most of the driving since she couldn't sleep anyway. "And besides," she added, "I was the only one with the license; the others only had permits."

Her friends feared she would drop out of college and become a truck driver, but Karen assured them that she doesn't like the smell of diesel fuel nor the persistent road construction.

Karen's interests are diverse. Presently she is taking flying lessons. "I like just about everything. My goal is to experience life to the fullest. I tried just about everything, and what I didn't like, I left go, but I always stuck with cattle."

The Chianina Queen contest seemed a little out her element for this athletic student who admits she used to own a dress, but didn't try it on for four years. When she decided to try out for the queen title, she bought a few dresses for the occasion. She confides, "It isn't wearing a dress that is so awful, it isn't bad—really, it's just that everyone that knows me makes such a big issue out of it when they see me in a dress." But out west, dress wearing worked fine for Karen since none of her friends were there to see her.

Karen represented the northeast region and came in first runnerup. She was pleased with her standing