

Mifflinburg FFA Student Places In Regional Contest

MIFFLINBURG — Mifflinburg FFA Chapter member Alan Kaler recently returned home from Massachusetts with a medallion and another milestone in his life. The 17 year old senior had recently attended the Eastern States Exposition or "Big E" as it is called in Springfield, Mass.

Alan placed 2nd in the tractor driving competition on September 19-20 at the expo that covers 15 states ranging from Maine to North Carolina and as far West as Ohio. Tractor driving was one of about ten contests for FFA students. Other competitions included poultry, horticulture, floriculture, and others. And, since Pennsylvania scored highly in all areas, they tied Ohio for 1st place in overall achievements.

The competition saw participants taking a manure spreader through a forty foot chute. The participant also had to back the spreader into a regular stall to within two inches of the rear gate. After that, a four wheeled wagon was pulled in a circle and backed into a stall, again respecting the two inch limit.

"The competition was pretty easy, but just because we thought it was easy doesn't mean that we did it correctly," says Kaler. Points were added for mistakes making the lowest score win.

The actual driving was not the only part of the competition. There was a mandatory safety check on the tractor driven and a 50 question exam covering safety practices of a tractor.

The FFA contests are just a part of the Eastern States Exposition's agenda. "It's like a big fair," says David Woodling, the Mifflinburg FFA advisor who accompanied Kaler. "This is a pretty big area, covering about 200 acres with a lot of exhibits and is about three times the size of Ag Progress Days. I'd say about 50,000 people were there."

To advance to the Eastern States, Kaler had to first win the area competition in Mifflinburg. The next step was to compete in the state tractor driving competition at Penn State during FFA activity week.

The son of Carl and Faye Kaler

of Millmont RD#1 in Union County, Alan is used to tractor driving on his grandfather, Ralph Kuhn's farm. Through help from his grandfather, a former dairy farmer, Alan has been able to raise project animals and work with crops on the farm. Though his father also raises 40 pigs on the farm, Alan takes care of most of the chores because of the elder Kaler's other job.

He has high hopes for the farm, which Alan eventually hopes to purchase. Currently, he has a 40 head herd of holstein heifers ready to freshen around graduation time.

I hope they freshen around that time," said Kaler. "If they're ready sooner, it could be hard to handle with school."

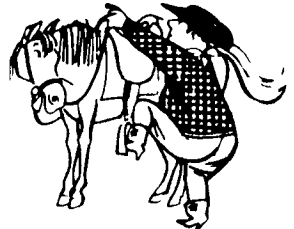
A longer range goal for Alan is to increase the dairy herd and crop production. He plans to grow corn for silage, hay, oats, soybeans, and ear corn on 150 acres.

With his success in present endeavors and his realistic goals to come, Alan Kaler promises to be a winner now and in the future.



Allan Kaler, from the Mifflinburg FFA, recently placed second in tractor driving at the Eastern States Exposition.

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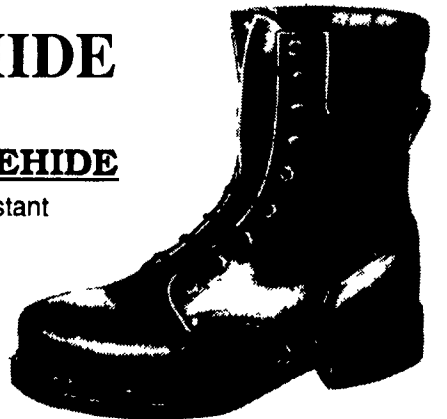
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