



Steve Kwisnet of Clarksburg got some help holding their premier breeder and exhibitor awards from Jennifer Mawhinney, PA's Lamb and Wool Queen of 1988 at last year's farm show. It was Steve's son, Gary who got the Kwisnets into the Southdown sheep show ring. Since 1975 the Kwisnets have been farm show competitors.

# Competitors Exhibit Pride

(Continued from Page A21)

fair in America's history. This spark of enthusiasm ignited a wildfire of fairs, but the first Pennsylvania State Farm Show was not held until 1917.

It wasn't until 1916 that livestock and horticulture were made a part of the agricultural exposition. But education was the goal common to all the fairs from 1686 to 1989.

The Pennsylvania State Farm Show of 1917 was called the Pennsylvania Corn Fruit Vegetable, Dairy Products and Wool Show. Only 5,000 visitors passed through the gates of this exposition held in the Emerson Brantingham Building in Harrisburg. This first show featured only \$735 in premiums compared to the 1989 farm show which offers nearly \$184,000 in premiums and is predicted to draw 250,000 visitors.

It was Franklin's belief that a strong agricultural industry leads to a strong American economy. He worked hard to instill that belief in all Americans. The sense of competition, enthusiasm and pride surrounding the first fairs created an atmosphere of excitement which is still characteristic of the Annual

Pennsylvania State Farm Show more than 200 years later.

It's easily understood why nearly a quarter of a million people will pass through the gates to view some 14 acres of exhibits and sample the foods offered in a carnival-like atmosphere. And visitors will pack the arenas and relax as they watch the best of the breeds Pennsylvania has to offer in dairy cows, sheep, hogs, horses, goats and beef.

But for those hundreds of exhibitors behind the scenes of the shows there is little time to relax. The farm show means long hours of hard work and little time to stroll among the exhibits and sample the food for those people who clean, brush, clip and snip and primp their best animals for the show of the year.

But in spite of the work, exhibiting animals at the farm show has become as much of a family tradition as gathering together for the Thanksgiving Day meal. For many exhibitors it is a sort of Thanksgiving. It is a celebration of a way of life.

**The Gift, The Beginning**  
For Gary Kwisnet of Clarksburg showing Southdown sheep has

become a family tradition and a family hobby.

Gary and his parents, Steve and Ruby Kwisnet, raised beef cattle on their Indiana County farm. That is until Gary convinced his parents to buy a few sheep. Those few sheep have become 150 head of mostly breeding stock winning ribbons in Southdown competitions in the fair circuit nationwide.

"I always wanted sheep ever since I was very little. And we didn't buy our first sheep someone gave it to me when I was fourteen," said Gary. "Now we have all sheep and no cattle."

The Kwisnets have been showing at the Pennsylvania Farm Show since 1975 and on the state and national level for the past five years. One of the ewes they'll be showing this year was the champion ewe at the Illinois state fair and came in third at the North American International Livestock Exposition held in St. Louis.

The grand champion of the 1988 Pennsylvania Farm Show as a ewe lamb was named the grand champion at the Big E held in West Springfield Massachusetts this year.

Preparing sheep for showing  
(Turn to Page A23)

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