

Glories Come To Maryland Holstein Enthusiast

BY SUE CROW

Maryland Correspondent

FULTON, MD — Matthew Lager went to the National Holstein Convention this year with the expectations of learning more about the industry and its policies. Little did he know that he would come home as one of the six Holstein Association's Distinguished Junior Award winners.

His work, which led him to this trip, started back in Fulton, Maryland, with two January calves given to him by his father Charles, for his first 4-H project. Now Matthew is a senior and his herd consists of 31 head, 18 of which he bred himself with an average classification score of 83 points. His herd is housed at the farm, Maryland Maple Lawn, which belongs to his parents, Charles and Judy and his uncle.

A march junior calf, MD-Maple-Lawn T T Etta brought Matthew the glories which most people just dream about. In 1985 Etta had her most outstanding reign. She captured 4-H and open supreme champion at the county fair; 4-H champion at the district show; 4-H grand and supreme

champion at the state fair; first place 4-year-old and Maryland Best Bred and Owned at the open show of the state fair. But the crowning glory came when she captured Honorable Mention Junior All-American that year.

Etta has over 120,000 pounds of lifetime milk production and is classified Excellent 90. She is a potential Gold Medal Dam when her daughters freshen. Matthew has six heifer calves from her, two being twin Starbuck heifers.

Living on a 1,100-acre registered Holstein farm between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. has the constant pressure of housing developments nearby. But that doesn't seem to bother Matthew or his two brothers as they have managed to continue the family farm into its fifth generation. Not only is there the usual farm work and crops to maintain, but there is also a 50-year-old turkey operation in which the entire family is involved.

Each year 10,000 turkeys are raised to be fresh-killed and sold retail at the farm for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The tom turkeys are frozen for restaurant deliveries



for the nearby cities. This location to the nearby suburbs has also enabled Matthew and his brothers to have a profitable produce stand at which they work in their spare time. Many vegetables have been entered at the local fairs as well as used as 4-H gardening projects each year.

Since 4-H has been a part of Matthew's youth, he has experienced many new avenues of life.

Not only has he served as a leader in the respective levels in the Howard County 4-H Dairy Club, but he has been in many contests as well. In the junior dairyman contest held in conjunction with the Maryland State Fair and the Eastern National he placed high. Matthew was also a member of Maryland's first-place Dairy Bowl Team which won the National Holstein Dairy Bowl Contest in Indiana.

The Howard County 4-H Dairy Club was first in the nation in 1981, and 1985 in the Hoard's Dairyman Judging Contest. He placed seventh in that last year. For the past two years the club has been High Honorable Mention, while his family placed first for two years in a row in the Family Division.

The experience has given Mat the opportunity to learn more about himself and his ability to work with others. It has also enabled him to pursue another direction—dairy judging.

After many years of practice and judging hundreds of classes, he reached his goal of making the state team. At Harrisburg, representing Maryland, he was high individual in Oral Reasons while the team placed fifth. At the National Contest the team went to three points away from a trip to Europe. Mat hopes to make the collegiate dairy judging team and later to make the Approved Judges List.

Not only has judging helped to build his own character, but it has taught him a lot about what to look for and breed into his own cattle. His responsibilities have increased on the farm as he has gotten older

and he has been able to draw from his past experiences.

The show string is one area where he and his brothers, Michael and Mark are solely responsible. After he joined 4-H, the showing tradition which was started in 1951 by his father, was left to be carried on by the boys. The fitting and showing areas are now areas where Mat helps younger 4-H'ers at the various shows.

School has played a large part in Matthews development. He is listed in "Who's Who Among American High School Students" and "Outstanding High School Students of America", on the National Honor Society, and is on the Honor Roll. He plays percussion in the concert and marching bands and is on the local little league baseball team.

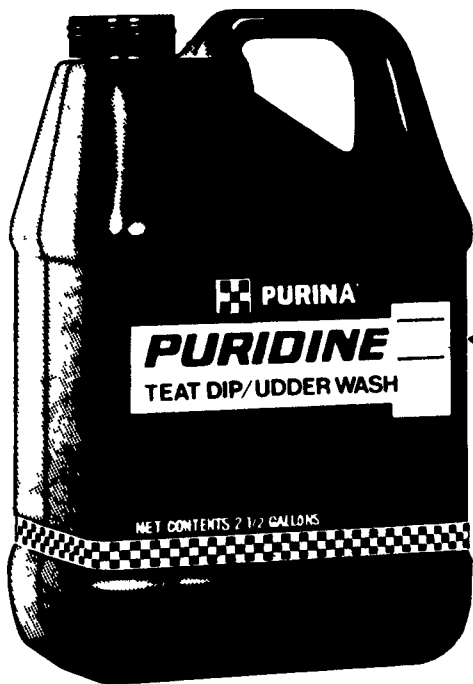
In the fall Mat plans to attend Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture in Doylestown, Pennsylvania where he has been awarded a 4-year Honors Scholarship. After college Mat hopes to enter Maryland-Virginia School of Veterinary Medicine.

The concern for the health of his own as well as the farms cattle has lead held to pursue the goal of becoming veterinarian. The 4-H motto, "To make the best better," is still part of his life in all his projects.

This is evident as he is now serving as the vice-president of the Maryland Junior Holstein Club. His leadership abilities continue to grow as do his experiences.

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