



The Mase family has a wall full of trophies for their Brown Swiss. They are especially happy with their recent sell of a two-week-old calf for \$1,900.

## Meet The Family Of Li'l Miss Lebanon County

BY LOU ANN GOOD  
LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) —  
"A beautiful cow is a beautiful cow regardless of color," remarks Gary Mase, then he flashes a mischievous grin and adds, "But it is always nice to beat the Holstein's records."

Not that Mase doesn't like Holsteins. He has about 20 of them sprinkled throughout his 60-head herd, but he is quick to admit that his true love is for the docile Brown Swiss.

Recently, one of his two-week-old calves topped the state sale with a price tag of \$1,900. The calf's dam was Mase's Meadow Hill King Beatrice, which is an Excellent and boasts a 30,000 pound record.

Gary and his wife Patty have more records of which they can brag. The Mases have several generations of 30,000 pound milking Swiss. One was nominated as an All American senior calf. Three times they topped the Maryland Mid Atlantic calf sale. They have five homebred Excellent cows.

"When our first cow hit 30,000 pounds, Mase said, "we thought we had achieved something, and then our second cow hit 30,000 pounds before the first finished lactation—now that was exciting."

Last year, Jessie Improver Lena was high cow in the county for protein in overall breeds. "It wasn't a

fluke," he said. "She's going to repeat it because she's doing even better now."

Cows are like family to the Mases. "I've cried more than a couple of times when I had to sell them or they died," Gary admits. "I don't think of each one alone, but as a cow family and the generation that follows it. I get attached. Sometimes I have a cow that does good for a couple of years and then she slacks off. I'm prone to give her another chance. Maybe she has calving or feeding problems."

What is the secret of the Mase's success? Gary credits feeding calves on nursed cows. "I put several calves in a pen with one cow, that might have a poor udder but still gives lots of milk, for two months, he explained."

He recently ran an experiment when he had many calves born at the same time. Some he put in hutches; others with a nursing cow. Within two months the nursing calves were four to five inches taller and much heavier than those raised in hutches.

"Sure," Gary admits, "I worry a bit about Johnes, but there's many ways diseases can be carried and it isn't really proven that nursing calves get it easier. The calves are bigger and healthier—and that's what counts in the show ring."

So far, the Mases have not had any trouble with Johnes or with

other diseases prone to nursing calves.

But the threat of disease does influence Mase's decision in some areas. This year, the Mase's did not attend the All American Show.

"My calves are too valuable to run to shows with the T.B. scare and everything," Mase said.

The decision was difficult for Gary who definitely delights in showing. He said, "Shows are cheap advertisement that gives you contacts, puts your name in the paper and in the breed magazines. I consider it routine work that is part of my job so it was really difficult not going this year."

"He has withdrawal symptoms every year he doesn't show," Patty said. "It's especially hard on him when he knows he has a better one than the one that won."

Gary nods his head and said, "I'm a competitor. I like to win."

Gary farms with his dad, Clarence. For the past seven years, Gary is in charge of the dairy end and his dad takes care of the field work on their 70 acres.

"You can say I started farming with my dad looking over my shoulder, but you don't learn anything until you make your own mistakes."

Brown Swiss, a rare breed for Lebanon County, captured the

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Gary believes that the combination of family, dairy, and sports allows plenty of time to do a good job at all three when following a milking schedule of 12 a.m. and 12 p.m. From left: Patty; Alicia, 5; Agatha the cow; Gary, and Tony, 2. Because he was in school, Garrett, 9; missed the family picture.

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