

Wool Wizards Spin Wool Into \$1,000 Award

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)— The Wool Wizards from Lancaster, Dauphin and York counties took home most of the top awards in the 1990 Pennsylvania Sheep-to-Shawl contest, held January 10, at the 74th annual Pennsylvania Farm Show.

The fall sunset design shawl that the team produced in two hours was named grand champion shawl at the close of the competition. It was sold to Ray Hillard, Jr. of Premium Ag Products, Richfield, for \$1,000. The Wool Wizards had also produced the 1989 grand champion shawl.

The team received rosettes, a plaque, a traveling trophy and a \$160 premium for their efforts. Each member of the Wool Wizards also received one of the special awards given in the contest, held before a large crowd in the Small Arena.

Shearer Chris Herr of Narvon, Lancaster County, was named best shearer of the contest and was the first to finish shearing his sheep, completing the task in three and a half minutes. The award was based on speed, absence of second cuts, absence of cuts on the sheep, and even workmanship.

Weaver Tom Knisely of Dover, York County, received the weaver's award for innovative design. The award was based on difficulty and detail of design, originality, use of color, drapeability, and judge's discretion. Knisely had prepared the warp threads using an ancient method of dyeing called IKAT, similar to tie dyeing.

The three spinners for the Wool Wizards, Carolyn Peyser, Kathy Graham and Mary Hubler, all of Dauphin County, took home the premium spinning group award. Overall uniformity and evenness of the team's yarn, and points accrued during the judging of the shawl were the criteria used to determine the award. It was the third year in a row for the team's spinners to receive the award.

The fleece award, based on cleanliness, condition, luster, crimp and suitability of the fleece, went to Diane Huddleston, Lehigh County, a spinner for The Bobbin Bunch. Huddleston owns the Cheviot ewe her team used in the competition.

For the second year in a row, the Wool Bags of Indiana and Jefferson counties produced the reserve champion shawl. The richly-colored "Joseph's Coat" shawl was purchased by Ken and Barb Longenecker of H & H Tack Shop, Annville, for \$900. The shawl also received the team's choice award, in which members of all nine competing teams vote for their favorite shawl.

Only residents of Pennsylvania are eligible to compete in the popular contest, held annually at the

Farm Show since 1981. Teams must qualify to compete by participating in one other sheep-to-shawl competition or two demonstrations within the past year.

The purpose of the contest is to promote the sheep industry of Pennsylvania and to provide a competition for regional crafts people. It was sponsored this year by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Grower's Association.

Shawls had to be completed -- from shearing the sheep to presenting the finished shawl to the judge -- within two-and-a-half hours to be considered for awards. All nine shawls were handed in within 2 hours and 22 minutes of the start of the contest. The fastest team, The Fiber Friends of Schuylkill County, completed their shawl in one hour and 55 minutes, with the Ewe-Nique Fiber Guild of Lancaster and Lebanon counties dashing to the front of the arena with their shawl only 30 seconds later.

Judges for the contest were Carol Woolcock of The Mannings Handweaving School and Supply Center, East Berlin; Evelyn Pison, a teacher of weaving at the State University of New York at Buffalo; Anthony Dobrosky, York County Extension Director; and Sigrid Piroch of Design Originals, Meadville.

Teams were judged on team identification (5 points), shearing (5 points), speed (5 points), spinning (35 points), design (30 points), and weaving (20 points). The Wool Wizards had 84.67 points, while the second place Wool Bags earned 78.33.

In third place, with a modified "Ginny's" coat shawl, were the Roving Rolags of Lancaster and York Counties. Fourth place went to the Bobbin Bunch; fifth place to the Spin Thrifts of Butler, Armstrong and Indiana Counties; sixth to the Fiber Friends, and seventh to the Lebanon Valley Woolseys, who were competing for the first time in this contest. Honorable Mention awards were given to the Ewe-Nique Fiber Guild and the Butler County Pedallers.



The Wool Wizards receive the travelling trophy for the grand champion shawl from Mrs. Robert P. Casey and Secretary of Agriculture Boyd Wolff. Spinner Mary Hubler holds the trophy aloft.



Ken and Barb Longenecker of H & H Tack Shop in Annville purchased the reserve champion shawl for \$900 in their first Farm Show purchase. Congratulating the Wool Bags and the Longeneckers is Secretary of Agriculture Boyd Wolff.

Extension Agent Retires

NEWARK, Del. — Cooperative Extension without Dean Belt, University of Delaware renewable resources agent, is hard to imagine. But his 28 years with extension ended this month as he began his retirement.

Belt has been with Delaware Extension since 1961, when he began his career as a 4-H agent in New Castle County. In 1978, he became the agricultural agent for the county, and in 1988, Belt was named the renewable resources agent.

The extension veteran took this responsibility seriously. "Each of us is a consumer of resources and each of us has an impact," he said. "We all need to insist that our land use activities do not create environmental problems. Open land must be protected for agricultural and forest use, water recharge, air quality and recreation. We need to become involved with conservation to be sure something is left for the future."

As renewable resources agent, Belt has also encouraged people to plant wildlife feed and cover, thus making their land suitable for leasing of hunting rights. Another

project has been exploring the possibility of cultivating paulownia trees as an alternative crop.

"These trees grow readily in Delaware, are quick to mature and have a high cash value," he said.

Belt grew demonstration paulownia at Middletown and Georgetown sites in Delaware. He sees the paulownia as an alternative crop to consider for small pockets of land that might otherwise go unused.

Belt will be missed in extension's ranks according to Dave Woodward, assistant Extension director for agriculture and natural resources.

"Dean was an excellent 4-H agent," he said. "He was respected by volunteer leaders as a most sincere and dedicated individual and an outstanding role model for youngsters."

"As an agricultural agent and renewable resources specialist, his expertise in working with people enabled him to serve the people of New Castle County and the state well," Woodward said.

Typical of Belt is his readiness to praise others before himself. "I feel I have learned more than I've

been able to contribute," Belt said. "Team work with agencies has been rewarding, everyone stepping in when their expertise can help."

Belt said he is proud of his extension work and his colleagues. "The interest that each of us has in Delaware's agricultural challenges is paramount. Extension is a team that can access a vast variety of information and agencies to help the people in the state."

Belt said his highlights in extension have been in helping farmers implement new ideas.

"When no-till farming first came out, it was exciting and rewarding to see farmers willing

to try new practices," he said.

Belt's retirement will allow him and his wife Peg, who works part time at a preschool child care facility, to take advantage of travel and other opportunities. But he said he also expects to be involved in activities with the Delaware community.

One day a week will be devoted to working with the Delaware Estuary program-- sponsored by the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts and managed through the Division of Water Quality.

"I'll be working to build public awareness and participation," he said, "and I'll enjoy continued contact with Extension."





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