



Although not raised on a farm, Jacy Clugston began milking cows on a neighboring farm when she was 12. Now 16, Jacy's success with farm work and FFA is steering her toward a career in animal and dairy science.

## Teen Prefers Barn Over House Chores

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff  
MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — Jacy Clugston, a petite and vivacious blonde, thinks cows are the neatest.

Since she was 12 years old, Jacy has been milking cows, cleaning the barn, giving cattle injections, and participating in FFA activities. As the state winner in the FFA creed contest, Jacy won a trip to the Kansas FFA convention last year.

If Jacy had been raised on the farm, her activities might have been expected but Jacy wasn't raised on a farm.

"When I was 12, I was babysitting for a little boy who begged me to take him to the barn," Jacy said.

A lover of animals, Jacy admired the cows and spoke with the herdsman about the animals.

Surprisingly, the herdsman offered Jacy a job. Thrilled, Jacy begged her mother to let her try it.

The experience changed her life.

"It was the best thing that ever happened to me — I love milking cows," Jacy said.

According to Jacy, Sarah Morgan, the herdsman, explained the duties, then left Jacy to work on her own.

Soon Jacy could easily handle the milking of 30 cows. She became adept at barn cleaning and giving the cows shots.

"I have a growing interest in vet work," Jacy said. "Sarah taught me a lot about animal husbandry."

Sarah also gave Jacy her first calf, which has now grown to be a cow and produced another calf.

In 1988, Sarah Morgan moved her dairy operation and Jacy began working for the neighboring Balmer Brothers Farm where she and three other women milk 130 cows.

With her interest sparked by her cow-milking job, Jacy decided to take an agriculture education class at Manheim Central High School where she was introduced to the FFA.

"I joined just for the heck of it," Jacy said. "I didn't know what I was getting into."

What Jacy discovered about the FFA excites her. "FFA is one of the best organizations ever. It teaches leadership, cooperation, and offers so many opportunities," she said.

One of those opportunities for Jacy is the speech competition. As a ninth grader, she competed on four different levels to win the

state championship in the creed contest. Her victory sent her to the national FFA convention in Kansas City.

Jacy, who claims to have a competitive spirit, likes to excel in everything. She was disappointed that ninth grade state winners weren't given the opportunity to compete on the national level, but she said, "The trip opened my mind to new opportunities and goals."

As a district speech winner in the FFA prepared speaking contest, Jacy hopes her speaking skills will gain another state win for her as the competition continues.

"Winning motivates me to go farther and to try new things."

The thought of not winning isn't completely demoralizing to her. She said, "If I don't win, I believe that God has a purpose for everything and I'll just try harder next time."

Within the next few years, Jacy hopes to try out for the county dairy princess title and for a national FFA office.

Her enthusiasm about FFA equals her dismay at Gov. Casey for cutting FFA funds. She said, "It's like biting the hand that feeds you. He's made a great mistake."

Her ambition is recruiting others to take ag education classes and participate in FFA.

Jacy's interests are not limited

to farming. She is a cheerleader, involved in the school musical, takes voice lessons, and sings solos at church functions and school chorus. She is also a member of the National Honor Society.

"I'm ambitious," Jacy said. "I like to push myself to do my best in everything I do."

Jacy has one 10-year-old brother who sums up his sister's activities with the words, "Jacy isn't around much."

Her FFA projects this year include her on-farm experience, a cow, a heifer, and a home-improvement project that includes pool repair, yard maintenance, and landscaping.

Jacy is the daughter of Kenneth and Phyllis Clugston, Manheim. Her father owns Craft-Bilt Construction, which builds agriculture structures.

"Sometimes," Jacy said, "I tell my dad, who had been raised on a farm, that women do a better job at milking cows than men. Women have softer voices and more patience and I think cows respond to that."

Her dad disagrees. He believes cows respond to whoever they get used to milking them.

Regardless, Jacy said, she found that she makes a fine match with cows and she doesn't let them intimidate her because of her small size.



Sixteen-year-old Jacy Clugston helps milk 130 Holsteins on the Balmer Brothers Dairy Farm, Manheim.



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