

# April Moll And Daughters

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er get ahead of fixing things. This farm is one of the oldest in the county."

"It's even got wooden pegs instead of nails," Melissa added.

The replacements are bred by a large, ornery bull. April scratched the animal's head while explaining his disposition. "He's fine as long as we're out here but I carry a stick when I step into the pen. I forgot my stick one day and he cornered me. I got bruised from the encounter."

Despite the Charolais reputation, April has found the breed relatively even tempered. "There are certain animals that are very protective of their young. When they're due to calf, we bring them into the barn and keep them there. I like to be able to walk in the fields without worry."

April's blind cow is a permanent resident in the barn. "She's a nice type cow and she gives me nice calves. It's hard to work with her because she can't see gates. We have a number of 16-year-old cows in the herd as well."

For the most part cows come into the barn for three days to have their calves so April can keep an eye on the offspring. April isn't a large woman and she uses persuasion to get them to the barn. "I bribe them with feed and if that doesn't work I leave the gate open. It takes me a little longer but I get the job done."

With a goal of improving their breeding stock the Molls have been buying semen from national champions. The breeding program has resulted in some excellent animals but April admitted that running the beef operation a mile away from the main farm presents some management problems. "We have twenty acres and a barn here. My parents have the house across

the road. It's tough catching animals in heat and I have to keep a close eye on them. During calving season I may run back over here at midnight to check on animals. It makes for some really long days."

On occasion it also calls for drastic action. "One animal was laying down hill and she couldn't get up to get to the barn. She was ready to calf and needed help but I didn't have a thing with me. Finally I took off my bra and used that. The animals were fine but it ruined the bra."

The pasture is surrounded by residential area, but the Molls have had only minor problems with their neighbors. "The acreage is small and we definitely are at the limits of our capacity. We do take manure and spread it elsewhere. The major complaint has been manure on the road. Occasionally the flies are a pest. For the most part everything is fine."

April attributes part of her good neighborhood relations to her high tensile fence. "My friend Helene Dreisbach said, 'High Tensile fence is better than a mink coat.' She's right!"

Since the operation has all the animals it can handle, the Molls are looking for quality. "We are now ready to start selling animals for breeding purposes. My problem is that for people to realize that you have quality animals you have to attend the national shows. Right now I just don't have time to do that and run the farm too. The girls will be taking animals to the Farm Show, and we hope that will help. We're looking forward to selling animals to 4-H'ers for their projects."

The Molls will also be selling some animals at the Dutch County Calf Sale.

At the present April has a yearling bull for sale. "He's out of

Highrise who was a national champion a couple of years back." Quality of this type doesn't come cheap. "It's not like breeding in the dairy business. If you wish to register the animal you have to buy a certificate along with the semen. Often the certificates alone cost \$200," April explained.

Farming has always been a stressful occupation. April has a support network that helps her to cope. "It was really difficult when the girls were young. The neighbors probably think we've got six kids because I spent so many years riding around on the tractor pregnant. I remember putting a pan of tomato sauce on the stove, running out to the tractor, going around the field once, and running back in the house to check on the kids and stir the sauce. It was crazy. Finally a group of us farm women starting having lunch together once in a while on rainy days. Nothing fancy but it gave us a chance to air out feelings and frustration. At our last lunch we went to the Reading Fair to watch a show and eat sausage sandwiches."

The neighbors, Warren and Marvin Teter, also pitch in when the Molls need help. Warren is a retired carpenter and he has our overflow Holsteins right now. We buy crops for Marvin. I do the routine maintenance on the farm machinery but Eckroth's is always there when I need them," she added.

According to Moll, there are plenty of female farmers. "Women who farm aren't really rare. It's just you don't see as much of us because we're home farming. There are many women who never miss a milking and some who farm truly farm alone."

Frank's busy schedule precludes him doing a lot of the manual labor but like many of her

male counterparts, April does have one job she leaves to her spouse. "I hate paper work. Frank does the bookwork for me and I try to keep ahead of the registrations."

## New Jersey Dairy Princess Chosen



The 1990-91 New Jersey Dairy Princess Patty Davis of Wayne, is the 17-year-old daughter of Doris Davis. She is Passaic County's first ever dairy princess. Her cows live on the only dairy farm in the county (Van Peenen Brothers) and her home is just 20 miles from downtown Manhattan.

Patty owns three registered Holsteins. She has worked for Van Peenen Brothers doing all of the usual dairy farm chores, and has been an active 4-H Dairy Club member and a Dairymaid for the past five years.

Patty is currently a freshman at the University of Wisconsin and plans to become an agricultural lawyer.

The Alternate State Princess is Noel Muller of Neshanic in Somerset County. Noel is a freshman at Elizabethtown College majoring in elementary education.

The State Pageant was held at Hunterdon Central High School in Flemington on September 8.

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