

# Kid's Korner

## This Big Cow Went To School

LORIN BEIDLER  
Special to Lancaster Farming

SPORTING HILL (Lancaster Co.) — Gym classes at Manheim's Sporting Hill Elementary School had to look twice one Friday morning as their laps around the school yard took them past the building's southern corner. After all, it's not every day that a cow and calf are permitted to graze on school grounds.

The bovine and her young son were not unattended, however. At the other end of their halters were Nelson and Alma Wenger, two of the local farmers who participated in Manheim Central's Ag Week in the Classroom recently.

Ag Week in the Classroom, which has been held at Manheim Central in each of the last six years, is conducted by the Lancaster and Pennsylvania Farmers' Associations with the intention of raising the student body's awareness of agriculture. Dorothy Myer, who along with her husband Carl, operates a dairy farm near Manheim, was asked by the Lancaster Farmer's Association to line up local farmers to give presentations on their type of farming to the district's various third grade classes.

Each day during Ag Week, the various third grade classes in Manheim Central's eight elementary schools heard reports on raising rabbits, sheep, poultry, hogs or dairy cows. Like the Wengers, many of the presenters brought animals along for the students to see and touch.

According to Myer, the program was started by a teacher/farmer's wife in Illinois who saw the need



Photos by Lorin Beldler

Nelson Wenger of Manheim holds the Holstein that he took along to Sporting Hill Elementary for the presentation

for more agricultural awareness on the part of her non-farming students. The program subsequently came to be endorsed by the United States Department of Agriculture, and later by the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association.

The main purpose for the week, says Myer, is to show the students how agriculture impacts their lives. "It's a way of getting in the classroom and saying 'Agriculture is a big business' — it's not just a farmer out there doing his thing, it's something that affects (the students) directly."

Myer points out that as the population of the county grows, such

programs become more and more relevant, as more and more people end up with farms in their backyards. Issues such as land use, food quality and respect for farming are becoming more pervasive all the time. The Lancaster Farmer's Association also provides teachers with support materials that help them prepare for the visit and for other independent lessons as well.

As April is the month in which most of the cultivating is done, it is typically a hard month in which to get farmers out of their fields — "When the sun shines, we're in the fields," says Myer. The program has proved so rewarding to farmers

and students alike, however, that Myer usually has no trouble getting volunteers.

In fact the program seems to be a hit with everyone. "The teachers always seem pretty enthused. They

usually want it back again (the next year), anyway."

And of course the kids like it too. "It's good for the kids," Myer adds. "The kids love the animals. You know how kids are with animals."

## Readers Write

Dear Kid's Korner,

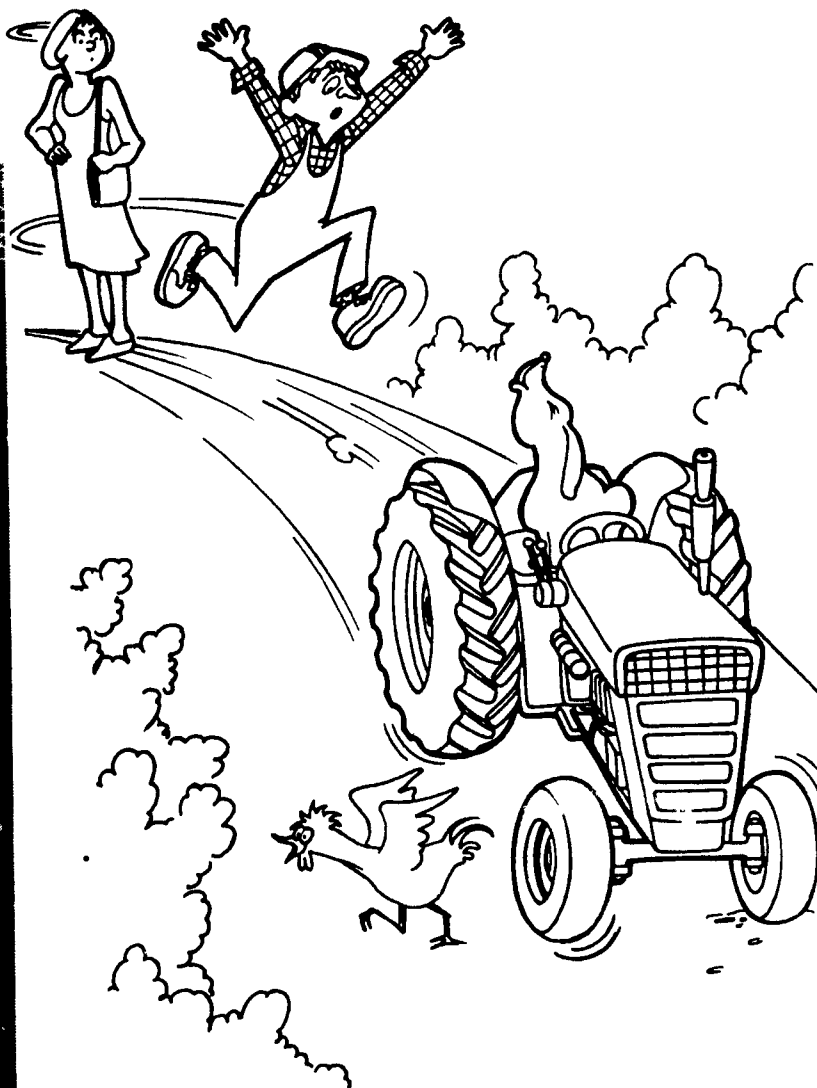
Hi! My name is Nicole Gross. I am 11 years old. I have a brother named Brandon. He is 9. This

week my family planted our garden. It was a lot of fun.

Nicole Gross  
Myerstown



Third graders at Sporting Hill Elementary School in Manheim greet a young bull-calf owned by Nelson and Alma Wenger.



Lock brakes before leaving the tractor seat.