

Showing Animals, Making Friends Create Winning Combination

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
PEACH BOTTOM (Lancaster Co.) — Gaining new friends and learning the importance of keeping records on animal progress are what part of being in 4-H is all about.

Ask Matthew Welk, 17, Peach Bottom, a junior at Solanco High School and a Solanco FFA member. A 4-H member for eight years, the enjoyment of taking care of and showing dairy animals paid off — not only in terms of gaining close friends, but recognition as the best 4-H owner breeder in the Holstein category in Lancaster County. He was also recognized as the 14-18 year old division champion showman.

Matt was awarded the special best owner-bred female award at the Lancaster County 4-H Dairy Awards Night last Saturday at the Farm and Home Center. The award, sponsored by Lancaster

Farming, shows how well 4-H'ers can do "with an animal that you have bred," said Sherri Coleman, president, Pequea Valley 4-H Dairy Club, who presented the award.

"Having the ability to recognize bad decisions, accepting mistakes and failures, and having the courage to forge ahead and live up to the 4-H spirit of 'making the best better' is an admirable goal," she said. The award recognizes members who have successfully attained many of these goals.

Matt, son of Bev and Paul Welk, raised a cow that won in its class at the Lancaster Co. Holstein Club County Show in August. It placed in the 4-year-old class. But the owner-breeder award has a special meaning for Matt.

"I was happy with that," he said. "That's a pretty nice award to get. It comes from having a cow of your own, and you pick the bull that you want to breed her to, and

that offspring would then be owned and bred by me.

"It's kind of a nicer award, you know, not like going out and buying good show cattle and then taking them to the show," he said.

Matt helps his mother and father on their 60-acre farm, where they operate a 50-head Holstein cow/calf operation. Matt himself raises 20 head of cows on his own, including seven milking cows.

Matt grew up farming. Up until last year, when they sold the farm across the street (100 acres, 75 head) and went into raising heifers, Matt helped milk. In addition, he helps his brother Mark, 25, a former 4-H member, milk on his farm in Quarryville.

Helping on the farm and paying special attention to the lessons learned in 4-H have helped Matt during competition in Kansas City, Mo. this week. There, Matt joined members of the Solanco FFA Dairy Judging Team picked to rep-

resent the state at the National FFA Convention in dairy judging competition.

Matt said 4-H leaders deserve a lot of credit for the support they gave him. "You know, a lot of responsibility and good management and the project books are helpful," he said. "They give you good examples."

Keeping careful records also contributed to the recognition. Matt said he was surprised at finding out "how much an animal really does eat, and what it costs to raise a 4-H animal."

Matt also shows about seven hogs and a steer for FFA projects.

BEST OWNER-BRED FEMALE
Ayrshire: Heather Becker, Narvon. Brown Swiss: Gerald Boyd, Ephrata. Guernsey: Scott Wagner, Quarryville. Holstein: Matthew Welk, Peach Bottom. Jersey: Karen Shaub, Quarryville.

CHAMPION SHOWMAN
8-10 Year Div. County Champ and District Champ: Zachary Meck, Denver. Reserve: Sarah Bard, Conestoga. 11-13 Yr. Div. Champ: Melissa Enck, Quarryville. Reserve: Sarah Kennel, Mount Joy. 14-18 Yr. Div. Champ: Matthew Welk, Peach Bottom. Reserve: Matthew Kolb, Lancaster.

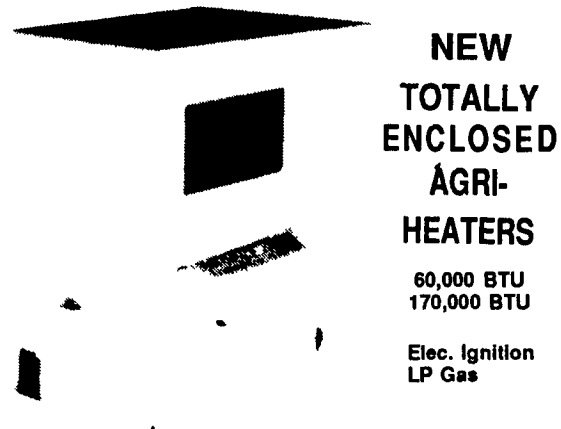
RECORD BOOK
Champion 8-10 Yr. Old: Brian Smith, Denver. Reserve: Dana Groff, Quarryville. Champion 11-13 Yr. Old: Gerald Boyd, Ephrata. Reserve: Denise Best, Holwood. Champion 14-18 Yr. Old: Sandra Kauffman, Peach Bottom. Reserve: Heather Becker, Narvon.

DAIRY JUDGING TEAM AWARDS
George Bard, Conestoga, third at Penn State and third in reasons.

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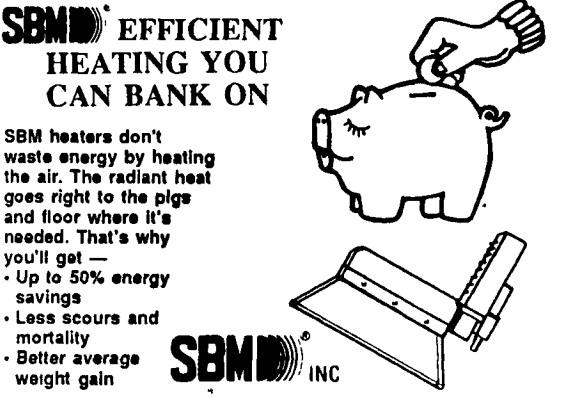
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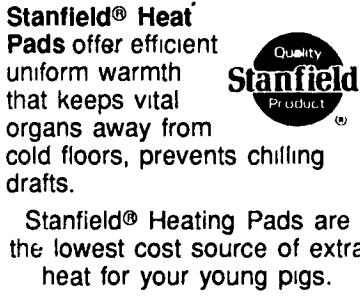
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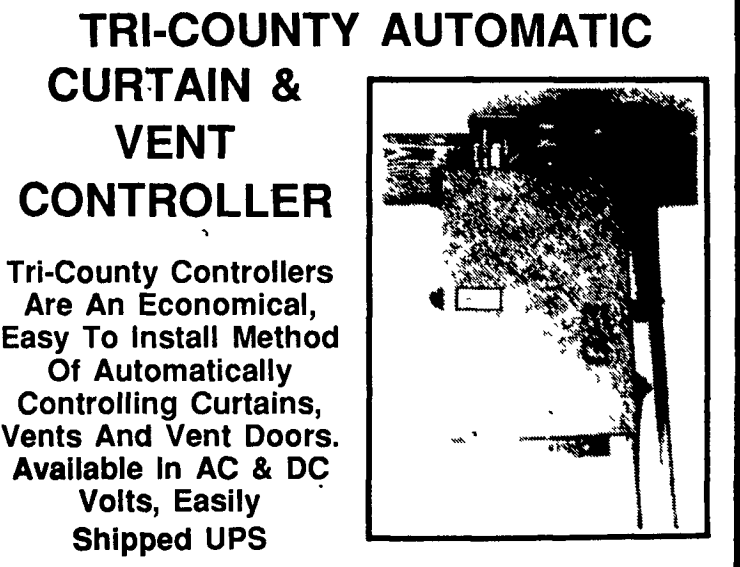
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