

## For the John Hess Family

# Farming And Making Ice Cream Go Together

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MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) —

As the weather turns warmer, John Hess not only thinks of plowing the 400 acres that he and his dad farm in Manheim but also of making ice cream.

As the Pennsylvania Farm Show champion ice cream maker, John wants to defend his title and warm weather is a great incentive to practice for the next contest.

John won the top prize of \$300 for his raspberry ice cream made with his mother's homemade raspberry jam.

"I was looking in the refrigerator for something to add to the ice cream when I noticed a jar of the jam," John said. "And, I thought the jam would make good ice cream."

His first batch of raspberry ice cream was too sweet. It took three practices before he found the right proportions to convince family members that he had a possible winning recipe.

"My family likes eating my ice cream experiments and they help decide how I need to adjust the recipe," said John who is the son of Sue and John H. Hess Jr. He has a sister, Elizabeth, 17.

When preparing for the Farm Show ice cream contest, John was so intent on pasteurizing the eggs, that he forgot to dump in the light cream and the vanilla.

Despite the mistake, John won top prize for his ice cream.

"That was when I learned that my recipe tastes just as good without the cream and milk," said John.

It was the third contest for the 21-year-old, who previously won an electric White Mountain ice cream freezer for placing third in Farm Show competition the previous year. During Ag Progress Days, he also entered the contest, but did not place.

John thinks winning a prize more than compensates for his experiments in preparing for the contest.

"You can't lose," his mother agreed. "You always have the fun of eating it."

But one time, the family did not enjoy eating an experiment.

"I had tried making apple crisp ice cream, and the apple crisp turned hard as rock. It was a tooth breaker," Hess said.

John said that he was never able to perfect that recipe, but still tries to figure out ways to keep the apples from hardening when churned.

The Hesses have several ice

cream freezers. While John prefers the electric one for home usage, in competition, he uses a 4-quart freezer with a hand churn. He believes a smaller, hand-churn freezer makes better ice cream.

John got his start in ice cream competition several years ago. That was when he was a state FFA officer. A meeting was held at his home for all the FFA state officers, and John made them homemade ice cream.

Later, one of the guests, vice president Tammy Balthazer, was asked to help oversee the ice cream churn-off at the Farm Show. She remembered John's homemade ice cream and encouraged him to enter it in competition. Although his freezer broke during the competition, John was able to earn a third prize and win a White Mountain ice cream freezer.

Since graduation, John is working in partnership with his dad on their 63-acre Manheim farm, where they have a farrow to finish hog operation. The Hesses have 60 to 70 sows.

"We don't believe in getting too large an operation. We think if we maintain a small sow herd, we can have almost as much profit as a larger operation without all the headaches," John said.

The Hesses rent about 400 acres on which they grow corn, tobacco, hay, soybeans, and small grains. Since 1983, the Hesses did not cultivate their crops, but this year, John said, "We're going back to cultivation. We have had trouble with weed control, especially dogbane, which herbicides won't kill. We think cultivation will also increase our yield," he said.

The Hesses raise their own corn for the hog operation. "But with last year's drought, we needed to buy corn and sell the hogs for 35 cents a pound. That's tough, but the farmer is the eternal optimist," John said with a smile.

"I have a really good working relationship with my dad. He is open-minded, listens to my ideas, and isn't afraid to let me try them," John said.

He especially enjoys growing tobacco and now plants eight acres of it.

During the winter months, father and son work on fixing up machinery. Two years ago, they built a shop for their mechanical and painting jobs.

"It's a good thing we enjoy fixing up old equipment because we can't afford new," John's dad said.

Recently, they fixed up the 1959 Edsel convertible that John's



The Hess family including Napoleon the dog enjoy eating homemade ice cream. Seated are parents Sue and John with children Elizabeth and John.

father had as a teen, and a Farmall H tractor.

John and his dad both participated in FFA during their high school years and find the training beneficial in managing the farm.

As a lifetime alumni FFA member, John has earned his American Farmer Degree, has been vice president of the Eastern Region, a state FFA officer, and won many speaking contests culminating in first place during the state prepared public speaking contest in 1988. He has shown champion and reserve champion steers at the Manheim Farm Show and was president of the Manheim FFA Chapter.

"I wasn't outgoing until I was in FFA," John said. "Public speaking did not come naturally for me. It was something I really practiced."

He attributes his success to two great ag advisors. "Chuck Bechtold made me compete in public speaking. I won first place in the first contest that I entered. It really boosted my confidence. After that, I couldn't get enough of public speaking," John said.

When he first entered FFA, there were only four students in the program.

"I watched advisor Deb Seibert take a class of four and make it grow to the point that they now need to turn people down who want to enter the program," John said. "She was behind me all the way. And, I can't say enough about her." Elizabeth, an FFA member at

Manheim Central High School, is following her brother's example by competing in FFA speaking competitions. Recently, she placed third in the county speaking contest.

John's mother works as a guidance counselor at Manheim Central High School. Her job, her son said, caused him some distress as a student at the same school, because she got a daily report from his teachers. But the close contact forced him to do his best as a student and helped him to excel in his studies.

The Hesses, according to John, are a strong 4-H family because his parents met each other through 4-H.

"I like being brought up on the farm. It conveys a work ethic. It's the way that I'd like to raise my family some day," John said.

He and his dad are looking for an affordable farm to buy in the area so that John can live on his own farm. While they are looking for the farm, John is also making plans to attend auctioneering school. And, of course, he is making plans to win the next ice cream churn-off.

Here are the prize-winning recipes for the ice cream and the homemade jam.



### RASPBERRY ICE CREAM

1 quart light cream or milk  
1 can sweetened condensed milk  
2 cans evaporated milk  
1½ cups sugar  
1 tablespoon vanilla, optional  
Skim milk, enough to half fill ice cream freezer

5 eggs  
12- to 14-ounces black raspberry jam

Heat milk, and sugar almost to boiling point; slowly add beaten eggs.

Pour the mixture into the ice cream freezer. Add vanilla, condensed milk, and the light cream. Churn until ice cream is partially frozen. Add raspberry jam and finish churning.

### BLACK RASPBERRY JAM

3 cups raspberries, put through food mill to remove seeds  
5¼ cups sugar

1 box fruit pectin

Stir sugar into fruit and let stand 10 minutes. Mix ¼ cup water and one box fruit pectin in small saucepan. Bring to a full boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. At once stir pectin mixture into fruit. Stir 3 minutes.

Immediately ladle into containers. Leave ½ -inch space on top. Wipe away spills. Cover with lids. Let stand at room temperature for 24 hours. Store jam in freezer.



John Hess, champion ice cream maker at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, churns another batch of his prize-winning ice cream made with his mother's homemade black raspberry jam.

# Homestead

# Notes