

Jill Harnish Follows Her Father's Example

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— For most of her life, Lancaster County Dairy Princess Jill Harnish has listened to her dad tell friends, "I'm lucky I don't need to work for a living because I can make a living off my hobby."

His philosophy sounds great to Jill, her sister Jenny, and brother Brian. All three decided to follow in their dad's footsteps to make a living off their hobby — farming.

R. Edwin Harnish shakes his head as he says, "Now I got bad luck. I must buy three farms instead of one."

The Harnish family farm has been in the family since 1934. In 1970, Ed purchased the 200-acre Christiana farm from his parents. He also rents an additional 200-acre neighboring farm.

"In the beginning, I liked the field work better than milking cows, but I soon learned that there's more money in cows and if you're going to make money, you got to pay attention to your cows," Harnish said.

As his love for cows grew so did his children. Now Brian, 23, works full time on the farm and has his own combine business. Jenny recently married Gary Bowman who farms in Paradise, and 17-year-old Jill has a passion for cows and vows to remain in dairy farming. She likes it so much that the evening of her first date was

spent milking cows. It was an evening where everything went wrong — pipes burst, the compressor would not shut off — and the time it took to fix everything extended long past Jill's curfew. Since then, Jill and her date have had better success when they took over milking duties.

In addition to milking, Jill takes a strong interest in studying breeding lines. She and her father like to debate different breeding philosophies, which Jill claims that she often wins.

Her father good-naturedly said, "Although I'm the overseer, I just do whatever they (the kids) tell me to do."

Over the years, Jill has purchased 12 of her own cows. She buys registered Holsteins. She said, "I look at the breeding, the potential to milk, and for something that looks like it will last."

In the fall, Jill will be a senior at Solanco High School where she is active in FFA. Last year, Jill was part of the dairy judging team that competed at the national convention.

Keeping Up-to-date

Jill definitely plans to continue dairy farming, but her plans for college are undecided. She said that if she does go to college it probably won't be ag related since agriculture is constantly changing and much of the written information is outdated. She believes that she can keep more up-to-date by



As Lancaster County Dairy Princess, Jill Harnish has inherited boxes of promotional material that she stores in the wash house shown in the background. Her parents, Ed and Arlene, dissembled the building that was on Ed's parents home and erected it as a place for Arlene to make and store crafts.



Jill shows off one of her favorite cows. The state dairy princess pageant will conflict with the Solanco Fair where she shows sheep, pigs, steers, and cows.



Nicknamed the Hay King, Ed Harnish checks to see if the hay is drying properly.

reading dairy-related articles and talking to other farmers.

"You pick up small things here and there and learn by trial and error. Just because something works for one guy doesn't mean it will for others. You've got to learn to decipher what to apply."

For the past one and a half years,

the Harnishes have been feeding a total mixed ration to the herd and notice that herd averages are up to 20,000 pounds, 810 fat, and 660 protein.

About three years ago, Harnish returned to the old tradition of housing dry cows on a manure pack with straw and corn fodder used as bedding.

"The advantage is that it keeps cows off concrete, which is better for their legs, and it reduces udder endema," Harnish said.

Heifers are bred at 15 months and milking is done in a stall barn.

Hay King

Those who know Ed well refer to him as the Hay King, for he has received grand champion ribbons in two out of three categories for hay at Ag Progress, reserve champion at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, and grand champion at the Solanco Fair.

When pressed for his secret for

growing top quality hay, he replied, "Do you think I'm going to allow you to print that in *Lancaster Farming*? Then I couldn't win anymore."

He did say that he uses a drying agent that only works in lagoons, not on grass.

Multiple Talents

A teen with multiple talents, Jill is an accomplished artist who won her first art award in first grade and went on to win many more. The most notable, according to Jill, is the one chosen for the Scholastic Art Show. In other years, she won gold keys for her work, but this year, her work went on for national exhibit.

The type of art Jill does depends the mood she is in. Jill said, "Sometimes I like wild and modern. Other times, traditional."

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Lancaster County Dairy Princess Jill Harnish with her parents, Ed and Arlene, sit in front of their dairy farm located at Nine Points.

Homestead Notes