

# Berks County Guernsey Exhibitor Prepares For Memorable Farm Show

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— For Susan Hollenbach, heading for the Farm Show is the big-time competition for her Guernsey cows.

It's an event she's excited about and which will cap a winning year for her and her family's Guernseys. At the Kutztown and Reading fairs this summer, Susan and her sister Amy, 15 and brother Daniel, 12, reigned supreme, winning all the prizes.

That's probably because there was no one else competing against them, Susan said as she coaxed a reluctant cow to walk with her first-ever halter.

"It's kind of like putting a dog on a leash for the first time," she said as the cow stopped, resisting Susan's tugging.

Susan, 22, who will graduate from Penn State the week of the Farm Show with a bachelor's degree in horticulture, will show four of the family's best animals, either hers or her father's.

The statewide Farm Show is more of a challenge, of course, for there is sure to be some stiff competition. But that doesn't seem to be the case in Berks County where

there aren't many Guernsey herds left anymore, said Susan's father, Carl.

The Zollers of Mertztown are the only others in the area who have a full herd, he said. Though Holsteins are prized for their ability to produce a lot of milk, Carl believes smaller cows, such as Guernseys, hold up better in the long run. It's just something he's observed over the years of working on the farm his grandfather bought in 1911.

Besides, he grew up with Guernseys. His smile echoes the merry twinkle one can catch in his father Miles' eyes.

Blue Mountain View Farm, as it's called, is known for the colorful hex signs painted on the original barn which faces Old Route 22. The family's 190 acres have sprawled across the highway since the mid-1940s when Miles and Lillian, Carl's parents, bought the farm across the street. They moved the milking cows and heifers down there and kept the dry cows in the original barn.

The couples' hard work earned them the honor of being named the first Farm Family of the Year in 1956 by the Reading Fair Agricultural Committee.



Blue Mountain View Farms, owned by the Hollenbachs, is one of the picturesque farms along the northern tip of Berks County. A sure attention-grabber with its colorful hex signs, the farm is featured on a postcard tourists in the area can buy. In the photo is Miles and Lillian's daughter Fay when she was 14.

"I was very active," Miles said about why he received the honor.

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Susan and her sister, Amy, practice leading cows around in a circle.



Susan Hollenbach, right, and her father, Carl, work with one the cows Susan will show at the Farm Show.



Carl holds the halter of Emaline, who is due to give birth during Farm Show week.



Susan stops to say hello to one of her best show cows, Truffles.



Carl and his parents, Miles and Lillian, reminisce about how Blue Mountain View Farms is one of the last Guernsey herds in the county.