



Katy and her parents, Lewis and Gail Biddle, raise 22 registered goats and 12 registered Belgium horses on their Centre County farm.

Goats Save Katy Biddle's Life

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OAK HALL (Centre Co.) — It's understandable that Katy Biddle is probably the most qualified teen-ager to wear the banner proclaiming her the Pennsylvania Dairy Goat Association Youth Representative. She owes a lot to the goat industry. Goats saved her life.

Actually, goats produced the milk that saved her life.

According to Katy's parents, Lewis and Gail Biddle, Katy was constantly sick during the first three years of her life — so sick that she almost died.

Pediatricians were puzzled. They could not diagnose the reason that Katy was unable to keep food down.

Finally, a family friend suggested they give Katy goat's milk, which has smaller fat globules and is easier to digest than cow's milk.

"We fed Katy goat's milk and from then on, Katy took off," Gail said. "Even her pediatrician is a firm believer in drinking goat's milk."

Goat milk continues to be a staple in the Biddle family, which includes Todd, 22, and Jennifer, 21.

The family raises 22 registered goats on their 75-acre Oak Hall farm. Of the Nubian, Alpine, and

Sannen breeds they raise, Katy prefers Sannen goats.

"They have such neat personalities," she said. Katy names each goat and is responsible to trim the feet, clip the hair, bathe them, complete health checks, test for Tuberculosis, haul manure, and clean cobwebs from the pens. It takes about five minutes to milk each lactating goat.

The goats are homebred with the three bucks on the farm except for one that was bred with AI in order to introduce a new bloodline the past year.

Katy shows goats at summer fairs around the state and at the national show, but not at the State Farm Show because that is where they show Belgium horses. This was the first year, the family was unable to show the 12 Belgium horses that they raise.

"Showing is a lot of work and requires several people," Katy said. "This year my brother could not help because of student teaching responsibilities."

Although she is only 17 years old and a senior at State College High School, Katy landed a job at Penn State College of Agriculture where she works in veal calf research.

This past semester, Katy helped research calf digestibility by feeding four different types of feed to

select groups of calves. It was Katy's responsibility to feed the calves, collect urine samples, and cook feces for the tests.

That project is not completed although the results of the data has not been analyzed completely. Now Katy is assisting in calf behavior studies.

Katy enjoys animal research so much that she is considering switching from her career choice of agriculture business to research.

Before she enters Penn State as a student this summer, Katy is concentrating on high school studies and activities. She is a member of concert band, president of the FFA chapter, member of the student advisory committee, and a member of the Future Business Leaders of America.

Katy was chosen to represent the goat industry after she and other contestants submitted resumes and appeared before a panel of three judges for questioning.

As the representative for the Dairy Goat Association, Katy performs tasks similar to that of a dairy princess. She promotes goats and goat by-products and appears at public functions to assist with promotional duties.

It is Katy's desire to make people more aware of the usefulness of goats.

Katy Biddle, the Pa. Dairy Goat Association Youth Representative, credits goat milk for saving her life. She wants to share her knowledge about goat's milk and other aspects of the goat industry with others.

Homestead Notes

"All parts of a goat are useful," she said. "We can eat the meat, get leather from the hide, wool from the hair, and make cheese, yogurt, soap, shampoo, hand lotion, and butter from the milk."

Most importantly, Katy wants people to love goats as much as does. She will always hold a special affinity for those awkward, lovable four-legged creatures that saved her life by providing easily digestible milk.

Did You Know ...

To most people in the United States, milk is synonymous with cows' milk. Yet on a worldwide basis, there are more people who drink milk from goats than any other animal.

Goats' milk has a more easily digestible fat and protein content than cows' milk. Consequently, many people who can not tolerate milk in their diets find that goats' milk is easily digestible. Doctors often prescribe goats' milk for those who have allergies or ulcers.

Goat milk is naturally homogenized. The protein value for goats' milk is similar to a cow, but goats' milk does have greater amounts of calcium, vitamin A, riboflavin, niacin, and some B vitamins. Goats' milk is a bit lower in cholesterol also.

There is a large demand for goat milk, especially in large cities where ethnic groups prefer goat milk and specialty items made from it.