

Kid's KOrner

York 4-H'ers Practice Dairy Exhibitor Skills

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DELTA (York Co.) — With long, sweeping strokes, Susan Richardson moved the buzzing clippers up and down the side of a dairy heifer, standing patiently amid a lineup of calves and clusters of 4-H members.

"I'm learning to body clip," said an 11-year-old from Fawn Grove, preparing for her second year of 4-H dairy project showing. "I need to know how to do this so I can clip my two Holstein heifers."

Nearly 30 York County 4-H dairy members turned out recently for the annual fitting-showmanship workshop, held at the Delta farm of Dan and Patti Hushon.

Separated by age into groups of four or five members, each group was led by an experienced adult or senior 4-H leader who demonstrated and explained proper clipping techniques.

"I'm learning to use a smaller clipper on the neck and a big clipper to do the other parts," said



Dan Hushon explains to his fitting-practice group the difference between various types of cattle clippers.

8-year-old Nicole Marks, Airville. Nicole, a first-year or Cloverbud dairy exhibitor, said she had clipped one heifer at home in the past.

Following a morning of clipping practice, members moved to a show-ring setting for demonstrations and hands-on practice of showmanship techniques. Older, more experienced 4-H members were paired with beginners, who learned how to walk, stand and set up their animals to best display the heifers' type qualities.

"We've been doing this for several years, but this is the first year we have ever had more than one person to demonstrate, so that we could break down into smaller groups like this," said dairy extension agent Jerry Myers.

"The purpose is to teach the 4-H'ers different skills in fitting and showmanship and also some of the basics in evaluating and selecting dairy animals," he said. "As a dairyman, a person must be able to evaluate animals in a herd.

It also helps teach animal care and comfort."

The focus of the workshop, said Myers, was not on winning but on participation and learning. At the completion of the workshop, each 4-H participant received a rope halter, donated by sponsors of the event.

Workshop group leaders were adults Jamie Hartman, Dan Hushon, Scott Cooper, Don Avery, George Knight, and senior

4-H'er Brad Walker.

Participants included Shane and James Kitner; Lisa Jones; Joseph, Jacob and Josh Hushon; Marshall Heaps; Nicole and Erin Marks; Angie Beshore; and Kimberly, Stephanie, and Jessica Pomraning. Also, Brian and Sara Greek, Kyle Bitzer, Jacob and Ben Smith, Jason Arnold, Michelle and Greg Walker, Katie Shoemaker, Jesse and Jason Stambaugh, Curt Calp, Heather Crowl, Susan Richardson, and Dixie and Daphne Doll.



"Not too much off the top," this Brown Swiss heifer may be telling Heather Crowl as she trims the calf's head.



Team leader George Knight Jr. shows senior 4-H'er Dixie Doll some of the finer points of shoulder clipping during the York County 4-H fitting and showmanship workshop.



Susan Richardson makes long strokes down a heifer's side as she body clips during the workshop fitting practice session.