

Children's Money-Making Project Turns Into Mother's Career

Lemonade Stand Evolves Into Goat Fudge Business

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 NORTH BENTON, OHIO
 (Portage County) — Sharen O'Brock of North Benton, Ohio, has been reading Lancaster Farming since she can remember.

It's brought her a lot of valuable tips in the small farm ventures she has enjoyed with her husband, Ken.

Among them, her successful career in making goat milk fudge which has given her good reason to proudly display the sign, "capricurist," on the side of her barn.

"The story," the petite, bib-overalled, Sharen says, began when her first child, a daughter, was only one year old. They bought her a goat. Both goats and children began to multiply.

Some years later there were five O'Brock children and 72 goats. "We were giving goat's milk to everything and it all thrived," Sharen remembers. "We had fat veal calves and healthy baby pigs as well as meeting our own fami-

ly's milk needs."

As the O'Brock children grew into the "lemonade stand," era, they began clamoring for ideas on ways to make money. It was Ken O'Brock who suggested "Goat Milk Fudge," like his mother used to make.

Using a standard fudge recipe, Sharen substituted goat milk for cow's milk, mixed up some fudge, put it in a cardboard box, and set the kids up in business on the front porch.

The entrepreneurs were so successful, they soon looked for other fudge markets and began carrying their wares to a weekly farmer's auction in nearby Damascus, Ohio.

"When we sold out almost immediately, we thought we really had something going," Sharen remembers. "Next we approached some local gift shops and farmer's markets. We put our fudge in neat white boxes and we were in business."

Today Sharen with children

raised and gone, is the sole proprietor, goat milker, fudge maker, bookkeeper, goat breeder, and marketer of her fudge today displayed in boxes depicting goat scenes.

Nearby Berlin Lake provides an excellent summer-based clientele with June, July, August, and September being her peak fudge months. "I sell up to 800 pounds a month in the summer," she admits. Her wares bring \$2.25 a half-pound box.

Fudge in flavors of peanut butter or chocolate is made in the neat and spacious kitchen the O'Brocks added to their new home, which has replaced the original . . . the one where the kids sold fudge from the front porch. There are no preservatives, only the goat milk, sugar, oleo, peanut butter or cocoa, vanilla, and salt.

The fudge is shaped on cold marble slabs as Sharen watches her grandchildren from the sunny window that overlooks a delightful play area. Three days a week she finds time to babysit despite her busy schedule.

Ken has worked in nearby Akron at General Tire for more than 30 years and, in addition, runs a part-time windmill business.

"But I don't mind doing everything myself," Sharen says. "I find such enjoyment and contentment in milking my goats. It's my quiet time, my time to relax." When the milking is finished, it is stored in a stainless steel, water cooled cooler. Attention to cleanliness is apparent and Sharen has had no trouble passing the Ohio state inspection required to sell her fudge.

She milks seven Alpines and has an additional seven kids and bucks. Sharen oversees all of the breeding, seeking bucks that have strong bloodlines to produce does with high productivity. Goat milk average is about 2,000 pounds with a special Alpine/Sanneu cross that gives 3,940.

Now that her children have left home, Sharen buys the feed for the animals that was once raised on the farm. "The only thing I add to their diet is comfrey," she says. "That adds a lot of protein and seems to keep by herd healthy."

O'Brock farm animals include chickens (Sharen also sells eggs), the goats, a pot-bellied pig, an aging collie and a Yellow lab pup.

Some people just seem to have more hours in their days than



Sharen O'Brock at work in her fudge kitchen.

others. Such is the case with Sharen who besides goats, fudge, chickens, a garden, lawn, large house, and grandchildren finds time to lead two 4-H clubs. One is strictly goats while the other has

multiple projects.

The O'Brocks' youngest son, David, is part of the International 4-H Youth Exchange and is the 1994 representative to Estonia.

Reading Terminal Market To Host Pa. Dutch Festival

PHILADELPHIA — This year marks the twelfth year that Reading Terminal Market celebrates the traditions, foods and crafts of the Pennsylvania Dutch with a festival scheduled for Thursday, August 4 through Saturday, August 6 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

This year's festival features many of the favorites from past years including: Johnny Claypoole, the hex sign painter, whose work is nationally known and on display at the Philadelphia Zoo as well as the Smithsonian Institute. Not only will hex signs be painted, but a Market window will get a dazzling new look as well with a four-foot painted hex sign.

Amish craftsmen will be featuring wall hangings, toys, wooden clocks, braided rugs, homemade brooms, cedar crafts in all shapes and sizes, old-fashioned wooden wagons, among many other traditional specialties. The Market's beloved Pennsylvania Dutch merchants will be selling homemade ice cream, chicken pot pie, peanut clusters, funnel cakes, donuts, canned and jarred goods using only the freshest produce from their summer crops, and many more delectable items.

The festival will also showcase live farm animals on Saturday (outside, Arch Street sidewalk) including sheep, goats, chickens and a cow, with milking demonstrations by Levi Fisher every hour. Free pony rides will be available for children on Saturday. Entertainment will abound on

Saturday with the Stone Mountain Boys (a gospel group) and a strolling musician.

In keeping with the PA Dutch Festival's tradition, a group of Amish women will once again demonstrate their talent in Center Court (all three days) as they sew the finishing stitches on a handmade quilt which will then be given away as the grand prize on Saturday. Other prizes include: a lunch and dinner for two, ice cream, baked goods, gift baskets, crafts, and gift certificates. To be eligible to win, sign up at the Market beginning Wednesday, July 27 at any of the Amish counters. Drawings for prizes will be held on Saturday, August 6 at 3:00 pm.

Special parking for the PA Dutch Festival will be available on Saturday only, on the north side of Arch Street (between 11th and 12th streets), and on the 12th street underpass between Race and Arch. The Festival is free and open to the public.

Reading Terminal Market is one of the world's largest indoor farmers' markets, offering an unparalleled variety of farm produce in season, Amish foods, ethnic restaurants, and fish, meats, poultry, and flowers from over 70 merchants under one roof. Recently renovated and air-conditioned, this 102 year-old market still functions as the region's only authentic farmers' market. Located at 12th and Filbert Streets, the Market is open Monday through Saturday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.



Sharen O'Brock and favorite, high-producing goat.



Sharen and the herd which provides the milk for her fudge.