

Mowrys Bring Capon Club To Bedford County Youth

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Bedford Co. Correspondent
BEDFORD, (Bedford Co.) —

A love for kids and the knowledge that the local poultry business is dying out while a demand for chicken is increasing led Gail and Gerald Mowry of Imler to start the Bedford County Capon Club.

Kicking off in 1993, the club has 22 members ranging in age from five to 17.

"Even those little kids can carry a bucket of water or grain to their birds," Gerald smiles. "It's lots of fun to watch them get enthused."

The venture also brought chickens back to the Bedford County Fair after many years' absence. "Think about it," Gail says. "I can just barely remember the last time chickens were a part of the fair."

Each of the club members enters two capons. A sale is then held in late September with each of the members bringing the dressed capons. Sale goers are treated to sandwiches, finger foods, and cake.

"Last year, we had a tremendous turnout," Gail admits. "But, we were a little disappointed this year." She adds that the first year invitations were done personally while, this year, they relied on handprinted invitations to local physicians, restaurants, and farm-related businesses.

"I think the person-to-person must work the best," she concluded. "It's what we'll go back to next year."

Gerald also thinks they may try becoming a part of the Bedford County 4-H. "They have far reaching contacts that we just don't have," he points out. "Our only problem was the young age of some of our chicken farmers, but the local 4-H doesn't see that as a problem."



Capon club members range from 5 to 17 years of age.

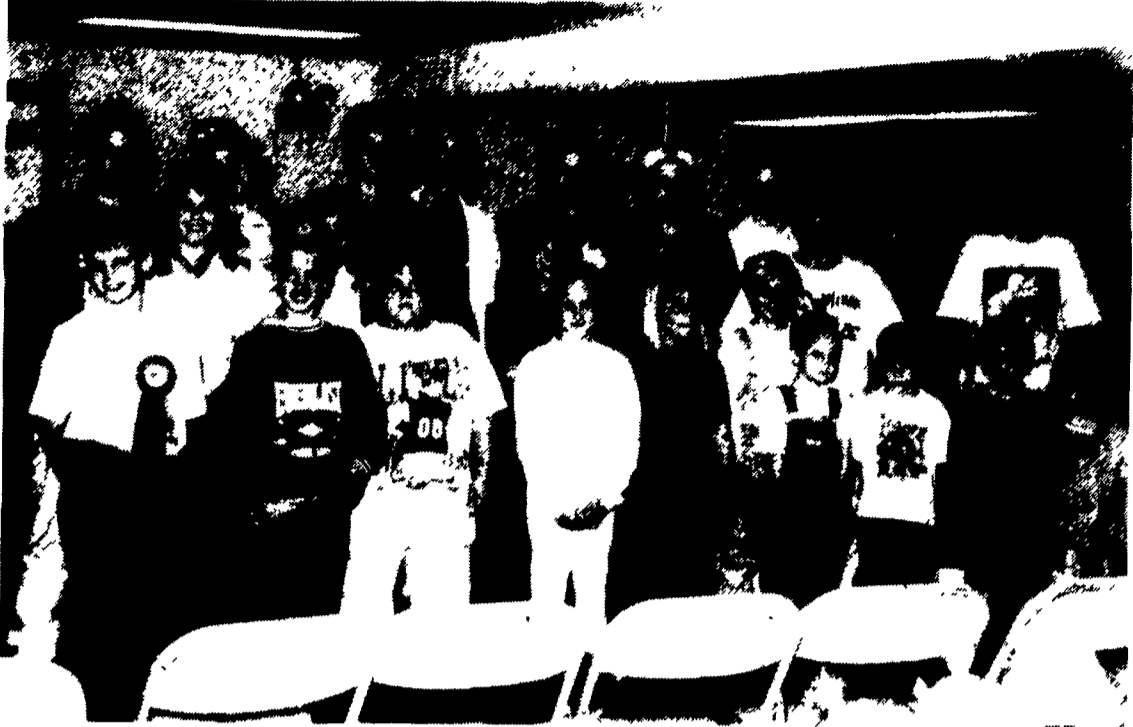
Even with this year's low attendance, the 52 dressed capons brought a total of \$1,252.82. All of the money will be returned to the club members who will use a portion of it to purchase birds for next year's flock.

"It will get easier," Gerald assumes. "The first year, we had to raise the money for chicks without any cash flow. We had hoagie sales and stuffed advertisements in the local newspaper in order to get started."

"And, we copied some of our ideas from the Cambria County Club."

It was Cambria County who first gave Gerald and Gail the idea.

"We were dressing their birds and just kept asking questions," Gail says. "Gerald remembered his grandfather getting him started with farm animals when he was a kid and we wanted to do the same for our grandchildren. It just grew from there."



Club members of the Bedford County Capon Club started by Gerald and Bail Mowry pose for a picture. They are Brandon Carson, Michael Berkey, Albert Corle, Megan Gayman, Susie Zimmerman, Corinne Berkey, Zachery Corle, Nathan Claycomb, Trevor Guyer, and Kirstin Guyer. Row Two: Michelle Toth, Cassie Imes, Sam Zimmerman, Jan Gayman, and Joshua Corle. Row three: Aaron Corle, Joel Corle, Corey Imes, Brian Toth, Jeremy Berkey, Stephan Feather, Jeremy Corle, Bobby Wolfe, Christine Zimmerman.

The Mowrys also see a future for some of the kids with the processing business. "It's a good business and one that no one is going into," says Gail. "It's hard work and not many people want to do it. But, at the same time, there is a growing demand for poultry and someone has to process it."

"It's also a good farm project for today's kids who are growing up on less acreage than we did. You can raise a flock of chickens on a little bit of land compared to beef cattle or even sheep."

Diane Myers, a friend of the Mowrys', does all of the caponizing prior to the kids picking up their chicks.

This year's grand champion was Brandon Carson who sold a ten-pound-eight-ounce; and a ten-pound-two-ounce bird.

Joel Corle was reserve champ with a ten-pound-four ounce, and a ten-pound bird.

Bordon Diehl, a sales rep for Thomas Chevrolet, was top buyer.



Stanley Claycomb, local auctioneer, volunteered his time for the annual September capon sale held at the Bedford Grange Hall. Here, a young capon member holds up her bird as Stanley urges the audience to bid a higher price.

Apple And Cheese Festival

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report on apples for school, so she was gathering all the information she could.

Another first-time visitor from the Williamsport area, Diane Brinser, remarked that the festival was "nice." She especially enjoyed the tour of the apple orchards.

From one idea, the size of an apple seed, grew an entire festival that the whole state can be proud

of.

"It started from just a very simple committee. People wanting things to be better in our town. We've been able to treat it as a business. I'm not sure that it's a business...it's life, you know, taking food things and working with them and doing the best you can and trying to create a positive feeling. Not just for Canton, but for the people who are here," said Stiner.

Greenhouse Seminar Set

WILKES-BARRE (Luzerne Co.) — The Northeast Greenhouse Seminar will be held Wednesday, November 9 at the Luzerne County Community College Conference Center in Nanticoke. The day's program will begin with registration at 9 a.m. and will conclude at 3:15 p.m.

Highlighting this year's program are Rick Malack, plant inspector, PDA, "Worker Protection Standards"; Lloyd Traven, Peace Tree Farm, Kintnersville, "Peace Tree Tales"; Steve Luscan, E.C. Geiger, Inc., Harleysville, "Marathon and Other New Products"; Dr. Michael Orzolek, Penn State

University, "Growing Systems"; and Eric Leavitt, Leavitt's Nursery, Lehigh, "How We do It."

To see what's new in the industry, be sure and visit the commercial exhibitors who will have displays set up exhibiting their company's products.

The deadline to register is October 31. The cost for the day is \$12 per person, which includes coffee and donuts and lunch. For more information and/or a registration form, contact the Luzerne County Cooperative Extension office at (717) 825-1701.

Pesticide applicator credits will be available.



Starting with the raw fleece, these "Ewe S.A. Gals" demonstrate the process to get Marino wool into a beautiful finished product. They were part of the educational emphasis at KILE. In the photo from left are: Wini Labrecque, Butler County; Candace Burke, Armstrong County; Debbie Kendall, Jefferson County; Bea Blose, Armstrong County; and Marie Frew, Indiana County.



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