

Pa. Dairymen's Association Recognizes Distinguished Dairy Woman, Others

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — For the first time, the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association has made equal recognition of the work of women in the promotion and success of the dairy industry as its men.

On Monday night, during its annual meeting and banquet, the members of the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association presented a Distinguished Dairy Women award to Janet Harding Ruslavage, better known as Jan Harding, coordinator of the state Dairy Princess and Promotion Program.

Dave Slusser, general manager of the Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association, served as master of ceremonies, and when he announced the award, he said, "It's about time we did this."

He was joined in that sentiment by several others during the evening meeting, including outgoing state Secretary of Agriculture Boyd Wolff, who was the featured speaker.

The organization annually recognizes an outstanding extension agent, and a member of the community who receives the Charles E. Cowan memorial award.

The Cowen Award is presented to a dairymen who has demonstrated superior management capabilities and provided outstanding leadership in the dairy industry. Cowen was secretary/treasurer for the association for many years.

Harding received the award, to be an annual recognition, for her years of dedication and devotion to the dairy industry.

Patty Murray, a director of the state Dairymen's Association, and friend of Hardings, presented the award and talked about the many contributions that women have made to the health of the dairy industry. "They are partners contributing to everything," she said.

Murray said that while conceiving of the award, a committee decided that the criteria should include that the recipient be a dairy farmer in Pennsylvania; be a promoter of the dairy industry; and have been involved in showing and/or involvement in a national or local breed organization.

She said that the description couldn't have fit someone better than Jan.

A special pendant was made for the award: a 14 karat gold cow suspended inside a sterling silver heart, on a gold necklace.

Jan Harding Ruslavage grew up in Montclair, N.J., and while her father owned a lumber business in New York City, she spent summers on a Jersey farm on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

A 1951 graduate of Vassar with a degree in political science and economics, she followed in 1952 with a short course in dairy production at Rutgers University. She then became director of promotion for Golden Guernsey Inc., until 1958, when she met Guernsey

breeder Charles Eugene Harding in an elevator at a Philadelphia Guernsey Convention, and then moved to Maplevale Farm in Brookville.

She and her husband built and managed an on-farm milk juggling operation and farm market with a deli, bakery, fresh produce, nursery, wholesale frozen foods, and gift items. She was active in the county 4-H dairy club, her church and served on the local school board for 17 years, several as its president.

At the same time, she remained active with the Pa. Guernsey Breeders and the American Guernsey Cattle Club, serving on its national board of directors.

Her husband was killed in a car accident in 1974, leaving her with five children to raise and the farm.

In the early 1980s, she became the coordinator of the Pennsylvania Dairy Princess and Promotion Program, traveling 50-60,000 miles escorting and chaperoning the state dairy princess. She organized county promotion committee meetings, put together the annual state princess pageant, and published related information. She is still coordinator.

In 1984, she remarried to Charles Ruslavage, an ex-football coach at Clarion University, and who also helps with dairy promotion (See the back cover of the 1994-1995 dairy princess recipe booklet).

This year's Cowen award recipient was Milton Brubaker, of Lititz.

Brubaker has been a lifelong resident of the Lititz area, and is affectionately known as "Mr. Ayrshire." After graduating from high school, he began attending Penn State University, but then returned to the family retail business, Spruce Villa; to help his family.

Spruce Villa was a door-to-door dairy business in the 1940s through the 1970s, and then a juggling operation until the early 1980s.

Brubaker bought his first Ayrshire in 1934, and developed a fine herd, until it was dispersed in the late 1970s.

In 1986 he was selected by the National Ayrshire Association to receive its distinguished service award.

He has served as a national consultant for the breed, and on the state level, he was state sales director and also secretary/treasurer. He has traveled extensively on behalf of the breed, into Canada, Greenland, and Australia. To date, he has given more than 60 years of service to the breed.

A 4-H leader in Lancaster County for 50 years, and involved with his church, also serving as its treasurer and as a Sunday School teacher, he continues to serve as an advertising representative for the Ayrshire Digest.

The extension award was presented to Bob Brown, of Somerset County.

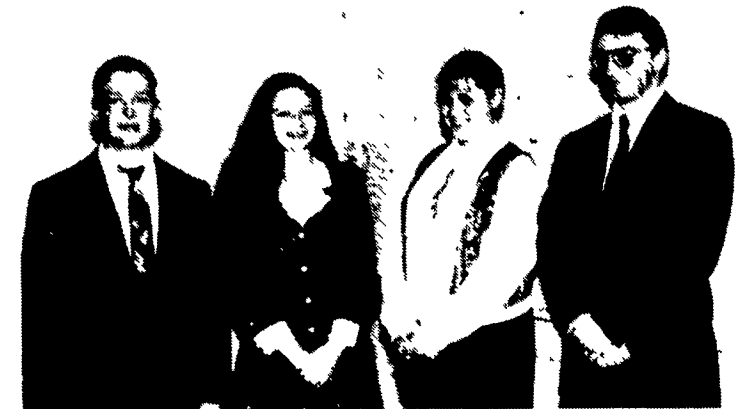
Brown has worked as a dairy and agronomy agent as well as coordinating 4-H dairy activities.

His 4-H dairy club program has more than 90 youth enrolled in local dairy groups. According to background information, "The education program are outstanding and volunteer leadership has helped to expand his extension program.

"The leaders receive training and their efforts have produced



Janet Harding Ruslavage, seated, is surrounded by this year's state and alternate state princesses; from the left, Rachel Tanis, Natalie Welch, and Melissa Bicksler.



The members of the 1994 state Dairy Bowl Team are recognized by the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association for the efforts in representing themselves and the state. From the left are members John Zaktansky, Melissa Dugan, Amanda Alpaugh, and Brian Landis. Not shown is coach Patty Kitchen.



Milton Brubaker receives the Charles E. Cowan Award from Logan Bower, president of the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association.



From the left, Bob and Carol Brown receive the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association Extension Award which is presented to Bob by Logan Bower, president of the association.

noteworthy results at local, regional and state levels. Competitions at the county fair, the regional and state 4-H junior dairy shows and the state 4-H dairy bowl round out an outstanding program."

Further, the 1990 Somerset County dairy bowl team was first in the state and first at the national contest; the 1993 team was first in the state and fifth nationally; the 1992 junior division dairy cattle judging team was first in the state.

State Dairy Princess Natalie Welch is also from Somerset County and spoke highly of Brown's dedication and enthusiasm to helping the county's youth understand agriculture and the dairy industry.

He has worked closely with supporting the local Dairy Herd Improvement Program, and other county dairy organizations, he has worked with dairy men, feed suppliers, veterinarians, milking machine dealers and helped to fight mastitis through education. He has assisted Penn State specialists in teaching dairy nutrition and milking schools and he has assumed leadership in creating some local and regional milking

schools.

He also works with the county dairy promotion committee, and he serves in helping to operate regional youth dairy shows, state 4-H Achievement Days competitions, on the dairy committee for the state Farm Show, and on the All-American Invitational Youth Dairy Judging Contest.

He is a member of Dairy Shrine, and was awarded the Honorary Keystone Farmer Degree by the state FFA Foundation in 1979.

Also recognized was the state dairy bowl team from Somerset County. They were invited to the banquet especially for recognition of their efforts in pursuing a knowledge of the dairy industry, and also for representing their community and the state in competitions.

Members include Brian Landis, captain, son of Daryl and Nancy Landis; Melissa Dugan, daughter of George and Barb Dugan, Watsonville; John Zaktansky, son of John and Deb Zaktansky, Watsonville; and Amanda Alpaugh, daughter of Daniel and Deb Alpaugh, Turbotville. Team coach was Patty Kitchen.