

Lancaster County Dairy Princess On The 'Moov'

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ELIZABETHTOWN (Lancaster Co.) — Motorists who spot a dark gray Nissan with the license plate, "Moov It," will notice that the driver is on the "moov."

That's because driver Amy Espenshade is the Lancaster County Dairy Princess who has places to go and things to do.

She's either dashing from one promotion to another or hurrying home to milk the cows or commuting to Penn State — York Campus, where she is a freshman.

"Some weeks I have a promotion every evening, but then it may go a week or two between promotions," Amy said.

While responsibilities with dairy promotion vary, her home and college responsibilities are constant.

Amy, 18, is on the dean's list at college and she manages to work almost full-time of the family's Elizabethtown farm.

Her parents, Harvey and Susan Espenshade, have always incorporated the help of Amy and her siblings Matt, 21, and Becky, 17.

Now, that Matt is in his senior year at Penn State main campus, Amy has needed to fill in a bit more.

"I feed the calves and help dad milk," Amy said.

The family milks about 50 cows and farms 140 acres of their own land plus 120 acres of rented ground.

College is easier than she expected but dairy princesses duties require more time that she expected.

"But I love being a dairy princess," Amy said as she flashes one of her generously dimpled smiles.

"I just love the kids when I do school promotions. If I give them a sticker, they are just in awe. They think that I'm Miss America."

Even the older adults seem mesmerized by Amy's skit in which she pretends she's a cow.

"I'm proud to be part of the dairy industry," she said. "I always appreciated how hard my dad works but now I see that many peo-

ple affiliated with the dairy industry such as the DHIA are working hard even if they aren't milking cows."

This appreciation extends to other non-dairy commodities.

"Before I was dairy princess, I thought that dairy people had it worse than any other agriculture-related commodity. But I've met the honey queen, the poultry queen, the lamb and wool queen, and others representing commodities and I realize that each industry has its struggles just like the dairy industry," she said.

Concerning the debate over the use of BST, Amy said, "I'm convinced BST is safe for people and for cows, but I don't think we need it because we already have a surplus of milk."

The prices farmers receive for their hard work are discouraging to Amy. She said, "My dad told me that we're lucky if we make \$13 for 100 weight of milk."

Despite the pay, Amy enjoys farm work.

Matt, who is majoring in dairy science at Penn State, will graduate this spring and return to the family's century farm, which has been in the family for 128 years.

"There's always something to do around here with the upkeep needed," Amy said. "We need to build a heifer barn and we'd like to get a pipeline because we have a dumping station now."

But those are long-term goals. Doing some cosmetic work to the outside of the house and redoing the porch are first on the agenda. Amy and her father just completed repainting the kitchen with its wide woodwork typical of homes built in 1857.

Work on the farm continues by using stone dust bedding for the cows.

Amy said, "It works great because it spreads easily on the fields. It doesn't stick to the cows like newspaper bedding. It keeps things dry."

Recently, some contour farming was designed for the back fields. Most of the field work is done by the men on the farm but Amy



Lancaster County Dairy Princess Amy Espenshade is on the "moov" as she hurries from farm to college to dairy promotions and back again.



Amy's family includes parents, Harvey and Susan, and siblings Matt, 21, and Becky, 17.

HOMESTEAD NOTES



Amy pours a glass of cold milk and says, "I'm proud to be part of the dairy industry."

sometimes hauls the wagons. Sister Becky feeds the heifers, cleans stalls, and throws down hay.

Amy's mother works full time as a nurse and helps feed calves and put on the milkers.

Matt's return from college is just in time, because Amy needs to head to the main campus next year to pursue her major in horticulture.

"I'm considering a double major by adding turf grass science," she said.

Amy's decision to make lawn care her career is an outgrowth of being in charge of lawn care and bedding plants around the farm.

"I love mowing lawn, but my dad tells me that 50 years of mowing lawns could get pretty old. If I get tired of lawns I could go in the greenhouse business," said Amy,

who has her sights on owning her own business.

Amy graduated from Elizabethtown High School, where she received numerous FFA awards and placed first in the state for ag salesmen during her senior year. This enabled her to attend the FFA National Convention in Kansas City. In 10th grade, she also was able to attend as part of the meat judging team.

Something new on the horizon for Amy is her engagement to Mike Bryant. The couple plans to marry when Amy graduates in 1998.

She and Bryant are in the process of becoming junior high youth advisers at their church — another responsibility that keeps Amy on the "moov."

