

# Kids Korner

## Third Graders Learn To Be Caretakers

FRYSTOWN (Berks Co.) — Increasing students' awareness of agriculture was one lesson taught to 108 third grade students and their teachers who participated in the Tulpehocken Elementary Agriculture Science Adventure recently.

A "Caretaker All" theme was applied to the event, with students divided into six groups that rotated through caretaker sessions. The event was hosted on the Mor-Dale Dairy Farm, operated by Ralph and Crystal Moyer, located near Frystown, Berks County.

Students discovered that "Caretakers of Animals" might include Staci Hytek and Ralph Moyer. Staci, a DVM, who recently completed her master's work in comparative medicine, brought along Tommy, the family retriever. Utilizing the dog she demonstrated and spoke on the importance of preventative health care.

Using a little "guillotine" type nail trimmer, a dog's nails can be trimmed. But you must watch for nerve and blood tissue.

"Ouch," listeners responded to that comment.

Why do dogs develop ear infections?

Yeast and bacteria grow inside the ear; therefore they must be cleaned once a week.

How does a dog develop a heart worm problem?

No one could answer that question. But if they listened, they were told that an egg-carrying mosquito that bites the pet could infect the dog.

Additionally, the listener discovered that it takes six months before the infection gets to the heart. But it is treatable and can be detected through a blood test.

Trevor Fessler offered his thoughts on the medication, "My dog has to take heart medicine. She doesn't like it though."

While holding a guinea pig, Hytek asked, "Why does a young one need its mom?"

To keep it warm and provide nourishment were the correct answers provided by those eager to cuddle the animal.

Ralph then took the floor and suggested that his cows receive a more balanced diet than most of you. He compared a newborn calf's quart bottle to a human baby bottle. "Wow," most observers responded.

Dairy cattle are also fed many ensiled or pickled products, comparing silage to pickles. A TMR or total mixed ration is fed to the cows at the Moyer farm. The TMR provides all the vitamins, mineral, protein and energy that the animals need, the listeners were told as they viewed a sample.

Feet (hoof) care is also important to cows. Large animal trimming equipment was made available to all participants to see.

If you were a member in the group led by senior agriculture student Amy Phillips, you met Caretaker of Plants for the day John Falter at the second session. John explained to the kids that seeds have several basic needs including: moisture, warmth and air. Soil must provide those basics for the plant.

Stephen Cotton expressed that best when he said, "Yum yum supper for my seed."

Each student had the opportunity to plant a marigold seed in a container of soil which was then taken back to school where they will await its germination and

growth.

"Marigolds are easy to grow and some people claim their odor acts as a repellent," Falter said.

Students also learned the various techniques of gardening as they planted the Moyers' garden.

Using string they prepared straight rows, sowed seeds, or transplanted.

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Tracy Wise and Heather Haff participate in a bag race during the after-lunch activity.



Brandi Light uses a microscope to observe critters that live in the water.



Buzz Frances points out critters which live in the water during the session on Caretakers of Water.



Janelle Ackenbach, Staci Hytek, Larry Ulrich, and Derick Redinger discuss taking care of pets.



Steph Ober, Ricky Kline, Tracey Wise, Larry Ulrich, Derrick Redinger, and Heather Hoeff hold recycleable containers during the session on Caretaker of Resources.