

# Lancaster County's Dairy Princess

(Continued from Page B3)

drawbacks when one has three brothers, Heather said. One day, the boys made iced tea. When Heather wanted some, they told her that dairy princesses are allowed only to drink milk or they will get that bone crippling disease.

A few days before Heather won the pageant crown, she won a top state FFA award and a trip to Kansas City (more about that later) and her dad purchased her a Buick Skylark.

"I really felt like a princess that week," Heather said.

During the week, the sisters both work for Gene Wenger's Meats. Their brothers and dad take care of the cows during the week. Twelve-year-old Delmar insists upon milking every morning. The family jokes that they need to remind him that, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

All the siblings belong to the 4-H Horse Club and Dairy Club.

"We are an old folks home for horses," Heather explained as she

told of the family's legacy for inheriting three horses and a pony.

One of the horses was branded out West and rounded up by helicopter.

To this day, the horse is wary of noises and is distressed by helicopters and planes flying overhead.

The family's horses are also known to be the most dairy-educated horses in the county.

"Spunky knows everything about the dairy industry because Heather practiced her speech while walking him around the meadow," Brent said.

The family's pampered animals include Mustard, a St. Bernard mixed with a labrador retriever, and Marmaduke, a Great Dane. Both are considered part of the family.

Brent explained that he and his brothers joined the 4-H Dairy Club because Jess's calf made it to states the first year that she showed.

"But the rest of us haven't been that lucky," he said.

Heather quickly added, "But we

have lots of added benefits from showing in 4-H, like friendships, learning responsibility..

"And, mostly learning to lose," Brent said bluntly.

The whole family laughed and agreed with Brent's assessment.

"We always show our own homebreds so they can't go and buy the best," their dad said.

He considers it a great benefit that the children belong to the 4-H dairy club because they take an interest in cows and pedigrees, which benefits the breeding program.

Heather excels in public speaking. She credits participation in a 4-H Toastmaster's Club and FFA as helping her develop speaking skills. In 4-H competition, Heather

advanced to state competition and in FFA, she made it to the state level two years in a row.

She has also placed first in state FFA ag sales, which resulted in her and her team winning an upcoming trip to the National FFA Convention held in Kansas.

At one point Laverne helped with milking and fieldwork, but she said, "I needed to get out of the way so the boys could learn to farm."

She now works full time as a secretary at a hospital.

The challenge in combining a career with mothering has been enjoyable for her. She said, "When I'm there, I'm there, and when I'm here, I'm here."

Because so many family members help in the barn, it is usually easy to adjust to someone needed off. This includes vacation excursions.

Last week, Heather and Jesslyn stayed home and milked the cows while their parents and brothers went to Hershey Park. Later in the week, the sisters went to the National Holstein Convention in Pittsburgh while the remaining family carried on the farming responsibilities.

At this point, all the children are interested in farming, so it's uncertain how the farm will be passed down through the family. But the siblings are adamant that they intend to keep the farm within the family.

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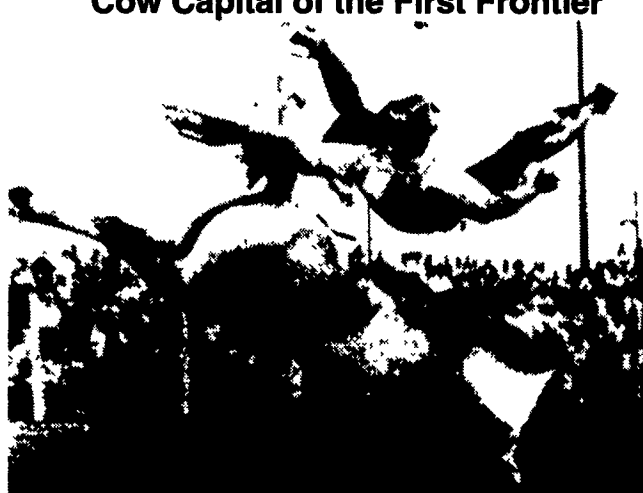
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