

Lamb Cook-Off Is Hit With All Ages

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— Not only does Jennifer Zimmerman win ribbons for showing lambs, but she also takes the top prize for cooking it.

"But I never eat it," Jennifer confessed. She can't stomach eating her own lamb that she pampered and cuddled during the show season.

Her brothers, also lamb exhibitors who live in Akron, and the 75 people attending the Lamb Cook-Off Contest held by the Woolies 4-H Club found the Hungry Jack Lamb Casserole scrumptious.

In fact, as a judge for the event, I can not imagine anyone not loving the taste of lamb if they had sampled any one of the 15 entries at the cook-off.

Indeed, it was a difficult decision for the other judge Margaret Herr and myself to choose the top three winners because each entry tasted wonderful. Because the entries were not broken down into categories, it was perhaps a bit unfair to compare roasts with stews, soups, casseroles, and kabobs. A tender, succulent roast seasoned with salt, pepper and thyme is a great entree to serve to guests but in a contest doesn't gain as many points for creativity and originality as a casserole or stew that uses unusual ingredients.

Tie for second place was split between two stews. One was prepared by Jessica and Carla Means with the help of their dad Richard and the other by Jessica Schmidt and her mom Laurie.

Carla, who is 9 years old and

from Quarryville, said, "If you keep the bones in the broth and take them out after the soup is finished, it will have a better flavor."

Jessica's dad, Pete, said he knows his wife is a great cook but he needs to come to the cook-off to taste her food. He revealed that when she prepared the stew the night before, he wasn't allowed to taste it and had to settle for a canned stew for his supper.

The Schmidts are from Drumore. Jessica and her brother John, who both show sheep, enjoy eating lamb.

Third place went to Sharon Bollinger of Ephrata for her Lamb Corn Noodle Bake. Sharon is the mother of three sons who have shown lambs for many years. She is an accomplished cook when it comes to making lamb.

The world seems to be made up of people who hate or love lamb and those who absolutely refuse to try it. Here's my assessment of those who claim not to like lamb — they haven't tasted quality lamb. It must be young, tender, and properly butchered. Many countries serve mutton, which is tough and not nearly as flavorful.

You're cheating both yourself and the lamb industry if you decide not to eat lamb again because you tasted it once and did not like it. To buy good tasting lamb, check with your local extension office for a family who raises lamb for butchering.

In addition to the recipes with this article, many wonderful recipes are available from the American Lamb Council. Send a self-addressed stamped business



Participants in the Lamb Cook-Off held at the Farm and Home Center in Lancaster on Monday night show off their culinary talents.

size envelope to receive free recipes from the Council at 6911 S. Yosemite St., Englewood, Colorado 80112-1414 or call (301) 771-3500.

PATRICK'S IRISH LAMB SOUP

Second-Place Tie

- 1½ pounds lean lamb shoulder, cubed
 - ¾ cup water
 - 2 cans (14.5 ounces each) beef broth
 - 3 cups cubed potatoes
 - 2 cups thinly sliced carrots
 - 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
 - 1 teaspoon seasoned pepper
 - 1 package brown gravy mix
 - 2 cups shredded green cabbage
 - Chopped parsley for garnish
- In 3-quart pan with cover, heat oil and add onion, sauteing until transparent. Add lamb and cook, stirring until lightly brown. Stir in water and pepper, cover and simmer for about 30 minutes.
- Mix in broth and gravy mix. Add potatoes and carrots, cover and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in cabbage and cook until cabbage turns a bright green.

HUNGRY JACK LAMB CASSEROLE

First Place

- 1 pound ground lamb
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 16-ounce can pork 'n beans
 - ¾ cup barbecue sauce
 - 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 - 1 tablespoon minced onion
 - 1 can Hungry Jack refrigerated flaky biscuits
 - 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Brown lamb and drain. Stir in next five ingredients, heat until bubbly. Pour into 2-quart casserole. Cut biscuits in half to form 20 half circles. Place biscuits around edge of casserole, cut side down. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 375 degrees for 25-30 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown.

LAMB CORN-NOODLE BAKE

Third Place

- 1 pound ground lamb
 - ½ cup chopped onion
 - 1 cup milk
 - 1 can cream of mushroom or celery soup
 - 8-ounces cream cheese
 - 1½ cups whole kernel corn
 - 8 ounces Kluski noodles, cooked with ½ teaspoon salt and dash pepper
- Brown meat and onion. Stir in soup, cheese, and milk until well blended. Add remaining ingredients. Place in buttered casserole; cover with buttered bread crumbs. Bake at 350 degrees until browned.



Gerald and Helen Tracy and son John of Elizabethtown enjoy tasting entries in the lamb cook-off.



Those who cooked or helped cook the winning entries are from left, Carla Means and Jessica Means, Jennifer Zimmerman, Sharon Bollinger, Jimmy Zimmerman, and Jessica Schmidt.

HOMESTEAD NOTES



This little fellow could hardly wait until the judges were finished so he could fill his plate.



Jay Zimmerman concedes that his sister's entry tastes pretty good.