

Kids Korner

Siblings Take Sheep, Steers, Pigs To State Farm Show Showing Is Family Affair For Donoughs

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**Lancaster Farming Staff
MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.)** — Hundreds of kids are showing livestock at the Pennsylvania Farm Show from Jan. 6-11. While the youth shows are considered a time for kids to show off their projects, don't let that fool you.

"Showing is not a kid's project but a family project. Kids can't do it on their own," said 15-year-old Travis Donough.

He credits his parents, Ed and LaRue, themselves former Farm Show youth exhibitors, for being supportive and motivating in helping him, his 12-year-old brother Ryan, and his 8-year-old sister Joelynn, with achieving great success in the show ring.

The Donoughs will haul 5 sheep, 2 pigs, and two steers to compete in swine, sheep, and steer classes at the Farm Show.

The Donough siblings compete in seven different shows throughout the year. Farm Show competi-

tion, they say, is the toughest and getting tougher.

"Kids are spending more money to purchase better animals," Ed said.

But purchasing animals doesn't always mean its a better one than a homebred one.

"I don't care how much money you spend to buy an animal. If you don't take care of it, it won't do you any good," Ed said.

This year the Donoughs purchased two steers from Iowa.

"We are not at all pleased with them," Travis said.

"Crazy" and "jumpy" are the words the Donoughs use to describe the steers. "They just aren't personable."

Despite the Donoughs persistence in leading the steers around the pasture, they still leave a lot to be desired although they are better behaved then before. The Donoughs think the nervous trait is genetic and no amount of working with the animals will change it.

The recent snow storms pose another problem in preparing the animals for showing. It is impossible to lead the animals on the hilly slopes around the barn because of the ice.

Nevertheless, the Donoughs spend a lot of time in the small barn where the sheep, steers, and pigs are housed.

Sheep are the Donoughs' forte. They have been raising Hampshires, Suffolks, and Crossbreds for years and have won numerous trophies and ribbons in county competition. Each year they choose sheep from their homebred flock to take to Farm Show competition.

They purchase pigs from different breeders. This year, they purchased Hamp-crosses from Maryland to raise for competition.

Although the brothers believe it is easier to show pigs, they enjoy the challenge of showing sheep. And, Travis does especially well in showmanship competitions.

Things at the Farm Show aren't exactly calm in-between competitions for the Donoughs.

"Usually, you have at least one sheep that isn't satisfied with its own pen. It'll jump into another pen or take off to explore the world," Ryan said.

One time, Ryan's soda was accidentally bumped off the show box, and the sheep rapidly lapped up the spilled drink. Now Ryan occasionally gives his sheep a few swallows — just because they love it so much.

The siblings will miss three to four days of school to compete at the Farm Show. This is no problem because all three are A and B students and have no difficulty making up the missed assignments. Travis is in 10th grade and an FFA student at Manheim Central High School. Ryan is in sixth grade at H.C. Burgard Elementary School, and Joelynn is in second grade at Sporting Hill Elementary. She is showing a sheep in the open class at the Farm Show this year. Next



Showing is a family affair for Ed and children Joelynn, Travis, and Ryan. Although she is not pictured, LaRue wholeheartedly helps with the kids' projects. The parents know first-hand the importance of parents helping their children achieve success since both of them were previous youth exhibitors at the Farm Show. In fact, Ed, who was from Manheim, and LaRue, who was from Nazareth, met each other at the Farm Show, and from that introduction, love blossomed.

year she looks forward to competing in the youth classes.

Unlike some exhibitors, the Donoughs return home every night. Travis said that he already has problems with allergies and asthma so the Farm Show dust aggravates his problems.

At the Farm Show, the Donoughs believe the top trophies are rather elusive because of the stiff competition.

"We're just hoping to make the sale," Travis said.

For their projects to be eligible

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Travis and Ryan consider it easier to show pigs.



From left, Ryan, Travis, and dad Ed round up Tombstone and Milky Way for Farm Show competition.



Ryan and Travis pamper their homebred sheep, which have garnered many trophies in local fairs. The Donoughs will take Cupid, Thunder, Amanda, Dakota, and Oscar to Farm Show competition.