

Investment In 4-H Sets Reiff On Career Track

Sheep Judging Champion Racks Up Full Scholarship

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
STRASBURG (Lancaster Co.)

— Lisa Reiff has been in the news for showing champion sheep throughout the county and at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. People have read about her being a member of the county 4-H Livestock Judging team that took national honors in competition.

Now the 18-year-old has captured another honor. She has been awarded a full college scholarship for her livestock judging abilities.

According to Chet Hughes, Lancaster extension livestock agent, Lisa is the first and only person in Pennsylvania to receive a scholarship for her judging abilities.

This award has opened up a whole new window of opportunity for Lisa, who was accepted and had been planning to attend Penn State University and now is headed to Dodge City Community College in Kansas.

"I found out that Midwestern colleges recruit students for livestock judging teams just like they recruit students to play football in the East," Lisa said.

Livestock judging in the Midwest, according to Lisa, attracts as much public attention as football or baseball playing does in this area. She also found out that in the Midwest, students attend community college that have livestock judging teams the first two years. If the student does well in competition, he or she is then recruited by a university for the final two years of judging competition.

The agent who recruited Lisa said that the idea to recruit an outstanding livestock judging member in the East was a novel idea that came to him while reading about Lancaster County's judging team in a national sheep magazine.

After reading the article, the agent contacted Hughes, who in addition to being a county extension agent coached the judging team. Hughes sent the team members' names and addresses to the agent, who contacted Lisa, the only high school senior on the team.

Not only did the idea to have free college tuition appeal to Lisa but also the opportunity to travel to contests all over the country.

"San Francisco, Denver, Texas, and Louisville are some of the places where the team competes," Lisa said.

Livestock team members prac-

tice every afternoon during the fall judging season, Lisa said. She has all morning classes so her schedule can accommodate the strenuous judging practices. Although she must attend all the practice sessions, Lisa will not be able to compete during her freshman year.

"It's a rule they have. You can't compete until your second year," Lisa said.

About 1,700 full-time students attend Dodge City Community College, which is in the city but near to the agriculture area of the Midwest.

"Farming is so different out there. You see massive feedlots for cattle everywhere," Lisa said.

Since Dodge City is a two-year college, Lisa thought she'd finish her degree requirements at Penn State. But the Dodge City College adviser told her to keep her options open. He said, "If you do good on the judging team, you'll find other universities at your doorstep waiting to recruit you."

Lisa will be taking math and business courses to earn a degree in accounting.

"But I want to stay in agriculture and do the agricultural end of accounting," Lisa said.

Lisa and her brother Lyndon have the distinction of winning every major sheep championship in the county for five years between 1990-1995. Her dream to show the grand champion sheep at the Pennsylvania Farm Show became a reality in January.

"Farm Show was the biggest highlight this year," Lisa said. "I put more energy into that than anything else. I was really committed to exercising that lamb every day."

It sold for \$1,800.

With so many accomplishments in her life, people tend to think that Lisa has been lucky. But she said, "People forget I didn't start at the top. I showed sheep four or five years before winning anything. And, I did really lousy in livestock judging the first couple of years. Actually, it wasn't until my senior year that things really started to come together."

Her parents think that Lisa's secret for winning lies in the fact that she stuck to sheep and livestock judging rather than be involved in a multitude of activities.

"I would have liked to be in sports at school, but I had to choose between sports and 4-H if I wanted to do a good job. I'm glad I chose 4-H because now it's paying college," Lisa said.

"Sometimes livestock judging was really frustrating, but it was worth it. Even if we hadn't won nationals, it would have been worth it. I made friendships that will last a lifetime."

Lisa said that judging requires a lot of time. But it's really the team effort that wins. She is grateful her team really worked well together.

"But without the coaches, I wouldn't be where I am today," she said of Chet Hughes, Greg Musser, and Fred Weaver.

Lisa has two lambs to show at the National Rib Cookoff and the county 4-H roundup before heading off for college August 15. While she is eager to attend an out-of-state school, she is also a bit apprehensive because it's so far from family and friends.

Maybe Lisa won't get homesick, but her parents know their life will change when Lisa heads for the West. They have been extremely supportive in sheep showing and 4-H. Although her dad Leroy will continue to lead the 4-H Woolies Club and served as chairman for the 4-H roundup they know that the house will be empty without Lisa and her friends. Laura, Lisa's mom, said, "Leroy asked me the other day if we should start bawling now?"

While home, Lisa also took responsibility for most of the cleaning and meal preparation since her mother works as a manager for a restaurant.

"I guess I'll need to hire a cleaning lady and make my own supper," her mother said.

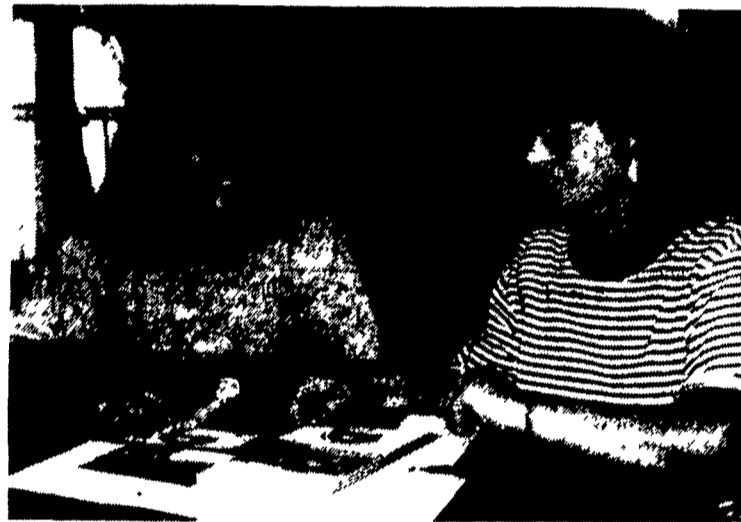
Lisa's two older brothers, Leroy Jr. and Lyndon, are married and no longer live at home.

Lisa, who has been banking her winnings for college, purchased a 1993 Cavalier since her tuition is paid. Although she will fly to Kansas with her parents, her brother, who is a truck driver, will transport her car to the college.

"I'm very fortunate," Lisa said of the full scholarship. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I want to really encourage younger kids to hang in there (4-H) even when you aren't winning. I want them to know that I didn't always do well in the beginning, but I didn't give up."



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Lisa and her mother Laura review information from Dodge City Community College in Kansas, where Lisa has received a full scholarship for her sheep judging abilities. According to Lisa, livestock judging in the Midwest commands as much attention and respect as football and baseball do in the East. Colleges compete to recruit top achievers on the judging teams. As far as can be determined, this is the first time that a full college scholarship for livestock judging has been offered to a Pennsylvanian.

Dairy Collectible Afghan Is Berks Fundraiser

MOHRSVILLE (Berks Co.) — The Berks County Promotion Committee is selling afghans as a fundraiser. Called the Berks County Dairy Collectible Afghan, it features all dairy breeds found in Berks County: Holsteins, Milking Shorthorns, Guernsey, Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, and Jersey. These names surround a dairy farm scene pictured on the afghan. Berks County is printed at the top and Pennsylvania at the bottom. Also in the four corners are shapes of Berks County with either a milk can or real seal found in the shape of the county. Also written on the picture is a bible verse segment

taken from Exodus 3:8, "A land flowing with milk and honey."

The afghan measures about 47x67-inches and is made of 100 percent cotton. It is available in three colors, Williamsburg blue, cranberry, and hunter green.

If ordered before June 30, the afghan costs \$40. After June 30, it is \$45. Shipping and handling requires an additional \$5.

Profits will be used to help support the Berks County Dairy Princess Program.

To order an afghan, contact Mary Haag at 468 Shartlesville Rd., Mohrsville, PA 19541 or call (610) 926-4211.



A whole room at the Reiff home is filled with trophies and ribbons that Lisa and her brother Lyndon won by showing sheep in the county and at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. Plus, Lisa said, "we have boxes of ribbons and trophies stored away because there isn't room to display them."