

# Multiple Honors Go To York County Berkshire Breeders

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of the state and was out of the hog business for a period of time, Greg and Beth have remained faithful to a minority breed that is a fast-rising star in the pork export business.

For the past four years, their enthusiasm for Berks and their desire to stay updated with the breed industry has taken the Innersts and their daughters Lane, 11, and Jessica, 9, to the Berkshire breed's national type conference in Dubuque, Iowa, held in early July. Here, in the heart of the nation's hog belt, top breeders gather from across the nation for educational seminars, a show and a sale.

But it was the first time in 16 years that the Innersts participated as exhibitors in the type conference's national show and sale. And, though they traveled the farthest of the more than two dozen families showing at the type conference, the long-distance haul of their four entries paid off in a big way.

One of their homebreds, a January-born, 305-pounder, was named the champion boar overall of the show of 60-plus head. A long and solid-muscled youngster, the boar was described by judge Al Christian, Iowa State University, as "complete." In addition to his winning type, the champion registered a backfat measure of .87 and a WDA, or weight per day of age, of 1.61.

At the sale which followed, the Innersts' grand champion boar, sold for \$2900 to Octagon Farms, Lacrosse, Wisconsin.

"He showed himself," claims Greg Innerst, recalling how the boar entered the ring with his head held proudly erect and paraded around the ring for the official. "He was bred on the basis of what I thought would work the best; we no longer have the boar that sired him so there won't be another one just like him."

"The pieces just fit together," grins Beth Innerst of the national win.

Also in the Innersts' show pens was a second homebred boar, one which had gone through the Penn State's meat evaluation testing program. That entry was chosen the champion tested boar and sold for \$900 to Allied Group Interna-

tional, a hog-production operation which exports high-quality pork to Japan.

Innersts' Berkshires also exhibited the third place market hog and took a fourth in the open gilt show. During the breed association's business meeting, Greg was elected to a three-year term on the national board of directors. Lane and Jessica were both finalists in the junior showmanship competition, with Lane ultimately selected one of two top winners in the junior age group.

Awards also went to fellow York County Berkshire breeder Arlie Cornbower of New Freedom, whose entries the Innersts hauled with theirs. Cornbower had champion purebred market hog and reserve champion crossbred on foot.

Then, just days after their success at the Berkshire conference, the Innersts were informed that a littermate to their national tested champion had been chosen for "hog college."

"Hog college" is a national honor recognized at the national barrow show, held annually in Austin, Minnesota. Numerous land-grant universities, including Penn State, conduct extensive evaluation testing programs. Each hog breed association selects best of its breed, based on nominations submitted via videotapes and test program statistics, to represent it at the national show. These "All-American" boars and gilts are exhibited in a lineup — known as "hog college row" — and are then paraded and sold during the national barrow show.

This year's national barrow show is the 50th, so the Innersts are especially thrilled that one of their homebreds will be representing the American Berkshire Association during the golden anniversary event. It runs concurrent with the York Fair, where the Innersts, including Lane and Jessica, plan to exhibit an extensive show string of open and youth class entries.

Greg and Beth maintain a herd of 12 to 15 breeding sows at their rural Red Lion farm, all purebred Berkshires except for one purebred Hampshire and a Hamp cross.

"We had to do something so the girls don't have to compete



Lane, left, and Jessica Innerst were chosen finalists in the junior showmanship at the American Berkshire Association's summer-type conference exhibition. Lane was one of the two winners in the junior age group.

against each other at all the shows," explains Greg of their inclusion of Hampshires in the breeding herd.

"We are a minority breed," says Greg of the family's choice of pigs. "In the 1940s and '50s, Berkshires were much more abundant. But the breed didn't change as fast as the industry did."

In his position as a national director, Greg Innerst will help promote the modern Berkshire breed and its growing popularity among pork exporters. The American Berkshire Association, headquartered at West Lafayette, Indiana, is promoting the meat quality of the breed with a program called Berkshire Gold. According to the Innersts, Berkshire Gold is making impressive inroads into the growing Japanese consumer market for high-quality pork.

"Berkshires test first or tied for first in every test category for meat quality," Greg asserts. "Theirs is the only carcass show where 70 percent of the score is on eating quality, in categories like tenderness, firmness, Ph level of the meat, leanness, cooking shrinkage and color."

In fact, he adds, competitors in Berkshire carcass classes have to wait for some time for results, because of the extensive testing that is done at Iowa State University.

Citing livestock show history, Innerst notes that Berkshires were named the champion carload in hog competition at the famed Chicago International Exposition more than any other breed. In fact, during the early 1950s, a well-known Berkshire champion boar and its owner were featured on the front of Wheaties Breakfast of Champions cereal boxes.

"I'd really like to find one of those boxes," says Greg wishfully

of the scarce item of breed history.

While hogs may no longer be pictured on cereal boxes, they are now the focus of photography and videotaping. Beth does the videotaping of their boars and gilts for competitive and merchandising efforts to promote the Innerst Berkshire bloodlines. She is also secretary of the Pennsylvania Berkshire Association and both play active roles in numerous show and hog industry activities.



GBI 6 Architech, bred by Greg and Beth Innerst, was named the champion boar at the American Berkshire Association's summer type conference and sold for \$2,000 in the sale which followed.

## Pa. Jr. Holstein Offers Opportunity To Own Calf

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania Junior Holstein Association has been extremely busy. As in past years the organization is in need of funds. Our large fundraiser for this year is the calf raffle.

The club is raffling off PHA Mandel Sharp-ET. All local Junior Holstein members have access to the tickets and will continue their sales until the drawing date which is Sept. 25.

Please help out the Junior Association by making a donation of \$5 for three tickets or \$2 each.

Note to Junior Holstein members: Awards are being given to the top sellers of the calf raffle tickets: Sell 100-249 tickets and receive PA Holstein Sweatshirt; Sell 250-499 tickets and receive PA Holstein Windbreaker; Sell over 500 tickets and receive both items from above; Sell the most over 500 tickets and receive \$100.

The calf's Pedigree is: PHA Mandel Sharp-ET.

Born: 9/26/95.

Sire: Lutz-Meadows E Mandel-ET.

Dam: Tidy-Brook B-Star Suzy-ET VG-85 2-01 365d 24,840 3.5% 875 3.3% 809 CTPI +1,888 +43F +69P.

Grandam: Tidy-Brook Sally Ned Boy VG-85 GMD DOM 3-10 365d 41,455 3.3% 1,379 3.3% 1,349.

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Special Events Building • 1996 Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs, Pa.



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Please call toll-free at 1-800-292-MILK by Wednesday, August 7 to make your reservations!



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