

Blair County Dairy Princess Shows Jersey Champions

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Bedford Co. Correspondent
ROARING SPRINGS (Blair Co.) — Leslie Bailey, a senior at Central High School and the daughter of Janet and Bernard Bailey, was crowned Blair County Dairy Princess in a coronation held on June 21.

She knows first hand what the dairy business is all about having a herd of 16 Jerseys in partnership with her brother.

Her participation in the state pageant will keep her busy as she

qualified to show several of her cows in state competition that same weekend.

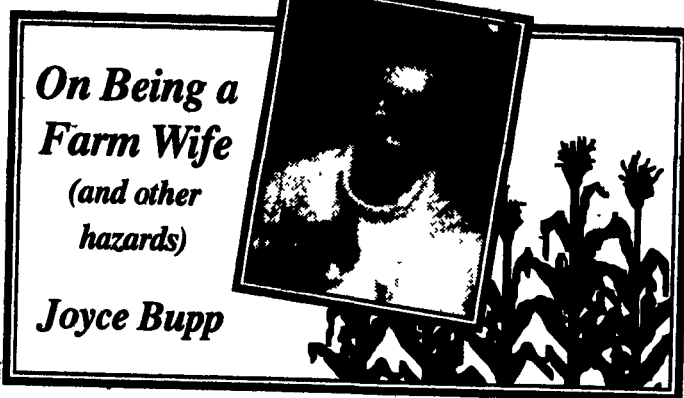
As a part of the Morrison's Cove Dairy Show held in late July, Leslie showed the Bedford/Blair Champion, the Senior Jersey and overall Jersey champion.

Leslie is a member of the Central FFA, Morrison's Cove 4-H Dairy Club, Blair County Lamb Chops, Blair County Tail Twisters and the Horse Club.

She is also active in the Penn West Conference Youth Cabinet of the United Church of Christ.



Blair County Dairy Princess Leslie Bailey shows her reserve champion Jersey, Les-Lee Expo Tequilla Storm.



But they look so cute out there. Little brown heads poked above the alfalfa. Standing on their back legs, peering around over the lush foliage, looking for danger. One bigger brown head, sort of looking out for a couple of smaller brown heads.

Groundhogs. Some call them woodchucks (as in "how much wood can a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood). Which they can't. But they can chuck away a bunch of alfalfa. Or a quarter-acre of soybeans per hog. Devastate a field of sweet corn just as it's about ripe and ready to eat.

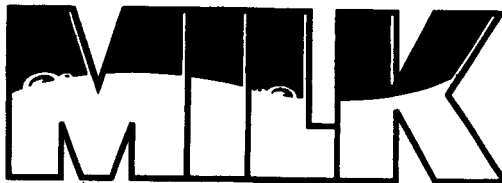
Which is why most farmers equate groundhogs as the field crop equivalent of barn rats.

Unlike some small, furry animals, groundhogs have never caught on as cutesy cartoon characters. Bears are beloved as teddies and bunnies own the Easter season. Mice have long enjoyed nursery-rhyme fame. Squirrels are television stars, featured in nutsy cereal commercials. Even amphi-

bians have Kermit as a spokesperson-frog.

Groundhogs do get their day here in Pennsylvania, even if all they have to do is stay asleep in a nice, warm burrow under the snow on February 2. Otherwise, those who love groundhogs the most are sharpshooters. Along with a few folks with bold, adventurous tastes in wild game who find them tasty roasted up along side a few tender, new potatoes.

This particular family of groundhogs "owns" the patch of ground around the electric pole located next to the garden, and over which our small patch of raspberries (weeds at the moment) are planted. They are too close to the farm for the sharpshooters, so they've enjoyed a peaceful and porky life chomping down the alfalfa. My efforts to eliminate them last year, after they gnawed off a row of peas, came to naught. Closing up their entrance only sent them out the back doors, probably grinning.



A new field of alfalfa adjoining the garden kept them busy in recent weeks. They grew fat and sleek, a mother and at least a couple of youngsters we could sometimes see from the picnic table on the back porch.

It was late May before the garden was planted. Eager for fresh tomatoes, I've eyeballed the plants' progress for what seemed like endless weeks, waiting for some warmth and sunshine to swell the tiny green orbs into red-orange juicy fruits. The first were just turning color when ... the alfalfa came off.

A day after the field had been harvested, I made my usual morning check of the tomatoes. And found blatant vandalism. Hunks had been chewed out of several of them, exposing juicy interiors and neat rows of seeds. Jagged tooth-tracks sliced through others.

In an effort to distract the devourers, I yanked off the plants several "aging" zucchini and yellow squash. Maybe the hogs would eat those and leave the tomatoes alone.

Yeah. Right. When cows fly. Next morning, one or two of the senior squash bore a couple of lines of gnaw marks — and several more tomatoes had their interiors badly exposed to the exterior.

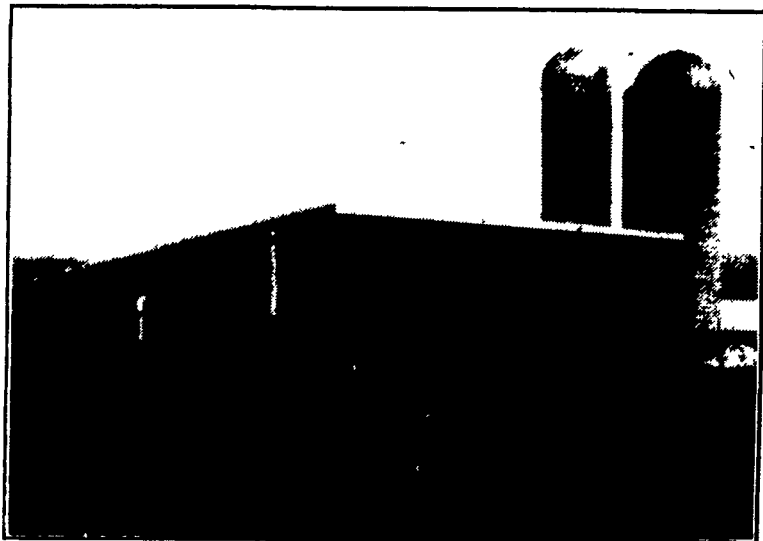
And the final blow came the day my first ripe cantaloupe developed a massive hole in its side, lined with neat rows of teeth marks.

There are ways to handle this problem. None of them are pretty.

So this is a standing invitation to any of those groundhog guru groups who might need a new mascot for their February weather prognostications. Stop by. Bring a cage. Come quick.

Groundhogs are not nearly so cute with tomato and cantaloupe all over their faces.

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