

Lopy Still Looks Good Even In Work Clothes

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
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WAKEFIELD (Lancaster Co.) — The supreme champion dairy cow at the 1996 Pennsylvania Farm Show still looks as good as ever in her work clothes on the farm of Robert, Joyce, and son Steve Wagner located east of town. SV Toptin Lopy VG-89 is just about dry and due in July, ready for the fall shows again. While not in the right stage of lactation to come back to the 1997 Farm Show, this tall Jersey with a lot of dairy character, a flat, wide rump and an excellent "dish-rag" dry udder, gives promise for a competitive show season at the All-American in Harrisburg, the Maryland State Fair at Timonium, or the World Dairy Expo at Madison.

"We would have liked to come back to the Farm Show with Lopy again this year," Steve said. "But it is hard to win with a dry cow. And the Farm Show is in the middle of January, so it is also hard to get cattle ready for this show. But the supreme champion class does tend to bring out good cattle even in the middle of winter."

At Bo-Joy Farm, Lopy with 2y 17,650m 870f 658p, and several other Jersey cows need to hold their own with a lot of good looking Brown Swiss and several Guernseys and Holsteins. And the supreme champion that was also reserve All American, fits right in the herd with size, even with the EX-92 My-T-Fine Pride Brown Swiss cow that has a top record of 4-9y 26,085m 997f 884p and her VG-88, EX-MS daughter Bo-Joy Emory Prim with 3y 20,546m 898f 806p.

Another Brown Swiss show winner Bo-Joy Blend Riffle was 1st place four year old at the farm show and has a record of 3y 20,782 1,043f 797p.

Steve's grandfather purchased the 200-acre farm in 1935. Until 12 years ago the Wagner family had Registered Guernseys. But they switched to the more rugged Brown Swiss, and today the herd consists of 56 Brown Swiss, 10 Holsteins, and three Jerseys.

The original seed stock for the Brown Swiss herd came from Marty Delbert's dispersal at Pine Grove and now only three dairy animals on the farm are not home bred.

Steve is known for his work as a fitter for some of the top show herds in the area. And that's what he did for a living until last year when he came home to help Mom and Dad with the home herd. Sandwiched in the middle, Steve worked for Em Tran, the cattle embryo facility at Elizabethtown.

"I came back home because the genetics here are so good, it was an opportunity I couldn't miss," Steve said. "To start with, Mom liked the Brown Swiss since they are so hardy and the modern cow is quite dairy and has increased in production quite a bit. We breed for type and try to make milk from what we feed. Type is the big thing especially feet and legs to make them last. We like cows that stay in the herd a

long time, so we don't push them in production as hard as some people.

"Showing doesn't make you money, but it gets your name out, and there is a great demand for show cattle especially in the Brown Swiss breed, for foreign exports. You meet these buyers at the World Dairy Expo."

The Wagners grow all their own feed and purchase only protein to top dress on the computerized feeder in the dry lot. A TMR mix distributed in the feed bunks is formulated for 70 pounds production with nutrient needs over this production calculated into the computer that measures out the individual cow's needs.

Free choice hay is given in large round bales to help develop more rib capacity. They milk in a double 4 herringbone milking parlor.

To be a good dairyman, Steve believes you need to be a well-rounded individual. "You must be versatile in everything," he said. "You need to be able to fix machinery yourself. And you need to have a lot of cow knowledge."

"Many people push for production setting world records. It is amazing what they can get out of cows. But for us, I could never go commercial. We try to set up for breeding type, doing the shows, and getting our name established for quality cattle. My goal is to have the kind of cattle that will fit the export market to make that bonus at the end of the year. You can make money from farming if you don't market offspring, but why just farm?"

The Wagners are not really into computers for their records and information from the Internet. They may get a computer in the future, but right now they do not see themselves having the time to play with it.

To select a calf for the show string, Steve looks for a quality calf that has the right type. They pull out their show calves in June and feed with the show ring in mind. They want the calves to stay clean and be trained to lead. A lot of timothy hay is fed to develop body capacity. Oats is fed to give a nice hair coat. Feet are trimmed, and the heifers are tied up but let out for exercise every day.

"Farming is getting harder and harder," Steve said. "The high milk prices this summer were a nice break, but they are not going to last. This was nice especially at the same time the grain prices skyrocketed. But now that the feed prices have settled down to a more reasonable level things will get more back to normal."

"I came back to the home farm because the time was right," Steve said. "We have an excellent genetic base for a top quality herd. And I'm looking forward to developing this herd into the future."

With Lopy, a Jersey supreme champion and reserve All American, and a barn full of Brown Swiss that have a type average of 86.1, you might be tempted to think the future is now.



The Wagners with two of the many good cows in their Bo-Joy herd. From left, Steve with SV Toptin Lopy VG-89, the Jersey that was supreme champion at the 1996 Pennsylvania Farm Show, and reserve All-American, and Robert and Joyce with My-T-Fine- Pride, the Brown Swiss that is classified Excellent 92.



SV Toptin Lopy VG-89, 1996 Pennsylvania Farm Show supreme champion and reserve All-American, with 2y 17,650m 870f 658p.



My-T-Fine Pride EX-92, with record of 4-9 26,085m 997f 884p and a daughter Bo-Joy Emory Prim VG-88, EX MS, with 3y 20,546m 898f 806p.

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