

Somerset Dairy Princess Wraps Up Successful Year

GAY BROWNLEE

Somerset Co. Correspondent
SOMERSET (Somerset Co.) —
 Amanda Meier, the Somerset
 County Dairy Princess, with mere
 hours left before her sparkling
 crown is passed to a new dairy
 industry representative, advises
 her successor to enjoy her reign
 and, also, to encourage herself
 throughout the year.

words about dairy products being
 so good for them.

"They really thought it was neat
 that there was this princess doing
 this magic act," Amanda Said.

Into her upside down top hat
 went a candy bar, out came string
 cheese; in went potato chips, out
 came ice cream; in went soda, out
 came milk.

The fascinated children were
 enthralled and eager to listen to
 whatever the princess said about
 dairy nutrition.

It's a small wonder then, that
 moments spent with youngsters
 this past year were the high points
 for Amanda, 17, the eldest of the
 five children of Andy and Susan
 Meier.

Unexpected for the princess,
 however, was to learn the family
 would be digging up their Somers-
 et County roots to move lock,

stock, and barrel, to a state further
 south.

Her dad had accepted a new
 position and the family farm had
 to be sold.

"It was a devastating thing," the
 Somerset Area High School senior
 said about her initial reaction last
 January.

Her commitment to the local
 dairy industry was firm, but
 inside, she struggled. Her spirits
 seemed devoid of enthusiasm, at
 first. But she bounced back.

"It was really hard to talk about
 promoting dairy products," she
 said.

At evening milking time, when
 no engagements called, Amanda
 was expected to help milk the
 mixed herd of 100 head of cows
 which, more recently, were sold.

"I complained about milking
 when I had to do it," she admitted,
 "but know I miss it like crazy."

Despite the temporary upheaval
 — her dad departing in March for
 Goldsboro, N.C. to manage a
 research farm for North Carolina
 State University; the farm's big
 equipment sale; moving in with
 George and Bonnie Baer, her
 maternal grandparents (who live a
 couple hills and curves yonder) —
 Amanda made at least one firm
 decision. She would stay in Penn-
 sylvania and complete her educa-
 tion at the local school.

Meanwhile, her mother Susan,
 and the other kids — Sarah, 13;
 Vickie, 11; Andy, 8; and Jeff, 6,
 are also staying with the Baer

grandparents until the upcoming
 dairy princess pageant takes place.
 Then, they too, will depart for
 North Carolina to be with the head
 of the Meier family.

Until then, the summer weather
 will see countless popsicles disap-
 pearing around the area of Gram-
 my Baer's front porch swing, but
 only because they are so refresh-
 ing and, because being sticky is so
 much fun as kids well know.

As long as they don't threaten
 some of the family heirlooms,
 Mrs. Baer will cope with the pop-
 sicle scenario.

It is milk jars that she concerns
 herself with. Gallon glass jugs
 from the old I.X.L. Dairy in
 Friedens that her father — Aman-
 da's great-grandfather — Ross
 Pile, founded.

The I.X.L. Dairy no longer
 exists, which is reason enough for
 Pile's descendants to so cherish
 the unique jars.

Making 120 appearances over
 the past year certainly taught
 Amanda how to prioritize a hectic
 schedule.

"I've had to make a lot of sacri-
 fices as far as 4-H and FFA, but I
 think it was worth it," she ob-
 served.

"Besides meeting thousands of
 people, I've made a lot of new
 friends," she added, tossing out
 more advice for her successor:
 "Be prepared for a very, very
 busy, but a very rewarding year."

Looking ahead, however,
 Amanda is anxious to continue

playing her bass clarinet in the
 marching band, concert band, and
 school orchestra; and to enjoy the
 concerts and festivals they partici-
 pate in.

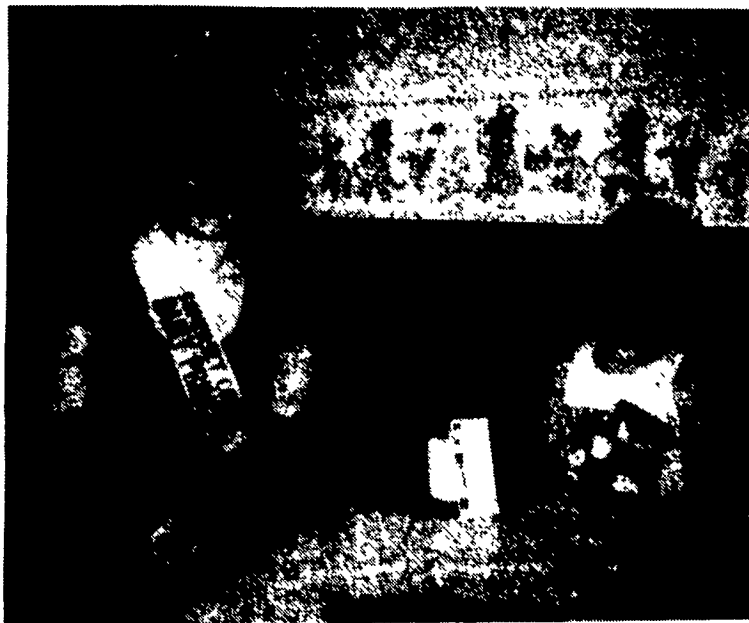
Upon completion of college,
 Amanda hopes to land a job quick-
 ly after having taken a double maj-
 or in music performance and sec-
 ondary education, she said.

Music is in her heart, but realis-
 tically, she knows that performing
 publicly could take time after col-
 lege. So she hopes a preparedness
 to teach will back her up.

She is excited about the tradi-
 tional family outing set for July in
 Bluestone State Park, W. Va., a
 place where the relatives get
 together for a week of fun.



Amanda enjoys being with her brothers and sisters.



Amanda Meier and a young friend at Somerset County Women, Infants and Children office.



Amanda on the porch swing holds an heirloom milk jar.

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