

Molly Blackburn To Show Sheep At Farm Show

LINDA WILLIAMS

Bedford Co. Correspondent
BEDFORD (Bedford Co.) — Linda and Bob Blackburn did not grow up on a farm but it was a dream they had for their children. The 17½ acres with the big rambling farm house they found 12 years ago was the answer to that dream. It allowed them to introduce their three children, Andy, Eli, and Molly, to the world of sheep. Today, they have 27 Suffolk and Suffolk cross ewes.

"We didn't know much ourselves," laughs the jovial Linda. "But, we were willing to learn and we asked the experts." The Blackburns purchase their sheep from the Lyn Lee Farms near State College. Lyn Lee is owned by Dr. Clair and managed by Steve Tay-

lor. "It's paid off for us," Linda says. "We've had five reserve champions at the Bedford Fair and, last year, showed the reserve champions at the Bedford Fair and, last year, showed the reserve champion at the Pennsylvania State Farm Show. Last summer, four of the six called back for Grand Champion were ours."

First Andy showed at the Farm Show, then Eli, and now 12-(soon to be 13-)year-old Molly has joined the ranks of Farm Show exhibitors.

"Molly has been an excellent help in the sheep barn," her mother says. "She is always there when I need her!"

Because of close observation, the Blackburns lambing rate has

been extremely good. "I get up every two hours during the lambing season," Linda says.

"As a result, all of the kids have learned to cook. It becomes a real family adventure."

The close attention paid off when, this past spring, when one ewe produced a 21-pound baby. "Molly and I both helped her," Linda says, "and we were proud of our accomplishment!"

It was the Farm Show that introduced the Blackburns to Lyn Lee which shows prize winning breeding sheep. "We not only buy our sheep from them, we ask their advice on everything," Linda says.

"We buy all of our feed and we feed them well. And, we keep our own bucks for breeding."

Two floppy Hungarian Sheep dogs lope around the Blackburn yard and, enjoy playing with, as much as guarding the sheep.

Several horses and some pygmy goats complete the Blackburn dream of owning a small farm.

And, again this year, they will be joining the ranks of much larger sheep farms with Molly and her ewe, Elsie.

Molly has been spending long hours preparing the sheep for the big day ahead.



Molly Blackburn shows one of her Suffolk sheep that she plans to add to the competition at the Farm Show.



Dairy Management

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previous issues, plus market information and links to their sites. A complete list of dairy related sites is on: <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~markv/bookmark.htm>. The web address of Dr. Mark Varner at the University of Maryland, Dairy Extension and Animal Science Department.

The Internet is quickly becoming a routine vehicle of answering questions and managing the dairy business intelligently, by accessing sources and people nationally and internationally with a seemingly unlimited line of topics. My UD e-mail

address is: george.haenlein@mvs.udel.edu, and my dairy columns are on the web at: <http://blueh.n.g.s.udel.edu/deces/dairycol/dc-list.htm>

In future, dairy farmers will buy feed, sell milk and cheese, file applications, discuss with neighbors and experts and search for new information to the daily challenges—all by using the internet. For some of you, this is happening already, for others, may the New Year give you the means and motivations to move into the electronic age of the Internet (at your pace, of course) with satisfaction of greater accomplishments.

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