



The McKeestead farmhouse is home for Virginia McKee Smith. Her grandparents raised 10 children here and Virginia and her husband raised four. Now son Steve and his wife Amy live in part of the farmstead.

Twenty Years Baking Pies For Farm Show Competitions

GAIL STROCK

Mifflin Co. Correspondent
LEWISTOWN (Mifflin Co.) —

"It was a challenge just to see how good I could do," Virginia McKee Smith of Lewistown comments about her 20 years of entering home canned or baked goods at the Farm Show. She's had a lot of experience. She and her husband Nelson raised four children on their Ferguson Valley Road dairy farm, where she has canned and baked to feed the family.

This energetic petite grandmother of four lives in the same huge red brick farmhouse in which her grandparents raised 10 children. Her father, who'd never been in the hospital, lived in the house until age 96. Virginia was born and raised here and now shares her home with son Steve and his wife Amy. Steve and Amy milk 75 head while brother Barry helps work the 100 tillable acres of McKeestead Farm's 200 acres. The Smiths also rent neighboring farmland. Virginia's husband Nelson is in Ohesson Manor following a stroke. She sees him nearly every day and tries to bring him home once a month.

"We were married 50 years this past summer, so I've done a lot of cooking," Virginia says as she deftly shapes sweet rolls that she's making that day in the comfortable kitchen. The sweet roll recipe she's mixed together came from neighbor Kathryn Fisher. It was printed in their Ellen Chapel Church cookbook. She bakes something nearly every day.

"I won first (at the Farm Show) for rolls several times. In fact, I won first place with a Peanut Butter Temptations recipe I clipped from *Lancaster Farming*."

Virginia says that former extension agent Clair DeLong encouraged her to enter the Farm Show. She was active in the Women's Extension group, and DeLong often took entries to the Farm Show for anyone who wanted to participate.

Virginia stops what she's doing to run down the steps to the basement. Returning, she climbs the steps back to the kitchen more slowly, carefully carrying jars of her hard work. She's holding pints of dill pickles and her version of "chow-chow." One jar still has Farm Show entry and prize slips taped to it.

"I like to garden and can," she
(Turn to Page B15)



Virginia Smith of Ferguson Valley Road near Lewistown enjoys gardening but likes to bake and can better.



Shaping rolls looks easy when you watch Virginia Smith. She freezes her award-winning Peanut Butter Temptations, shown in the front container.

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