

Princess Nichole Meabon

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tants. Instead, Nichole went to a luncheon at a restaurant with a few people, where she was officially proclaimed Erie County Dairy Princess.

"There are not many eligible girls who live on farms in my area," Nichole said.

Dairy promotion is nothing new to Nichole, who served as a dairy maid in 1995.

Fitting dairy promotional responsibilities into her schedule is no easy feat.

"I wasn't able to be involved in sports as much as usual," she said. But teachers have been supportive of her need to miss a lot of school while she fulfills dairy princess duties. Nichole estimates that she misses a week or two monthly for promotion. Although she is a good student and a member of the National Honor Society, Nichole doesn't need to study much and does not have a lot of homework.

About 600 students attend Seneca High School, where Nichole is student council secretary, a member of the Model United Nations Club, cheerleading, and French Club.

Although she misses many of the practices, Nichole is allowed to participate in cross country run-

ning. Nichole was also selected as a Penn State University-Pennsylvania Cooperative scholar sponsored in conjunction with national cooperatives.

Although Nichole isn't a primary milker on the farm, she does help in the two barns. Every Sunday, she gets up at 5 a.m. to help with chores. It's her job to be in charge of the TMR mixing system, put grain on cart, feed, and scatter hay in the box stalls and in the calf pen.

The Meabons know firsthand the dangers of farming. Randy was injured in farm accident and lost one leg from the knee down.

"He has had a great healing process. It happened before he was married, and he is able to do all the jobs required for full-time farming," Nichole said.

Nichole had a brush with injury also. When she was eight years old, she was walking her 4-H Jersey calf down the lane. Something startled the calf and it tore off on a run. Intent on hanging on, Nichole was dragged face down.

While facial injuries healed, Nichole has a big scar on her knee to remind her to use caution at all times.

"My mother had always told me that I shouldn't wear shorts to the barn," Nichole said. "I learned the

hard way that parents know best."

The Meabons' milk is shipped to Dairy Farmers of America," Nichole said. Her father is on the Milk Marketing Inc. board and Dairy Farmers of America. Her mother is a 4-H dairy club leader.

The Meabons' cows aren't limited to the barn. The family has a black and white kitchen with Nichole's mother's cow collection capitalizing on bovine decor.

The family isn't complete without mentioning the dog named Spud. According to Nichole, Spud doesn't bark; instead, she talks. "Really, it's more like a grumble," Nichole admitted of the dog's ability to communicate.

Maybe some of the dog's speaking ability comes from growing up around his mistress—a great communicator.

Nichole is deciding between either a career in advertising or in ag communications and ag journalism, and between enrolling at either Penn State or Kent State.

While Penn State is generally the university of choice for a Pennsylvania dairy princess, Nichole said that she had always heard that Kent State has a beautiful campus and is second in the nation for its communications program.

Nichole has a headstart in com-



Randy and Paula Meabon congratulate their daughter following her coronation at the Pennsylvania Dairy Princess pageant.

munications. She has won several writing awards and had an internship with a local television station. She is editor of the school news-

paper and helps with a church publication. Of course, her role as state dairy princess is really a great education in communication.



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