

Heather's Comedy Promotes Dairy Products

(Continued from Page B2)

two cousins also show. Among them they sometimes take 25 head to local fairs.

The first year in 4-H competition, Heather won master showman and fitter. Since then she's ad up and down years. "I've made it to state competition a few times," she said.

Heather is president of the local 4-H dairy club.

Heather said that her great grandparents Theodore and Anna Closky purchased the farm in 1947. They started off with one cow, two horses, and 89 acres. By 1952, the herd had increased to 17 cows, and the barn floor was cemented. The cow herd increased to 50 head by 1958. In 1960, Heather's grandfather Donald Closky purchased the farm from his dad and added a heifer barn. In 1969, he had increased the milking cows to 70 head, but still used bucket milkers. In 1975, her grandfather installed pipeline milking facilities.

In addition to milking 150 Holsteins today, the acreage has also increased. They farm 250 acres of corn and 150 acres of alfalfa. The herd average is 17,900 pounds milk, 4 percent fat, and 3.4 percent protein.

Heather seldom milks on the farm, but she does feed the calves. "My absolute favorite thing is to bottle feed the calves."

Because Heather so often accompanied her grandfather on the tractor, he lovingly refers to her as "My Fender Bender." Putting

hay away is another big family event in which aunts, uncles, and cousins work together.

Heather's grandfather has just had knee surgery, so the family is doing his chores while he recuperates.

Heather is a junior at Cambridge Springs High School. Teachers and classmates have been supportive of her reign as dairy princess. She misses a lot of school to fulfill appearances across the state.

"I didn't expect non-farming classmates to know or care," Heather said of being selected from 29 contestants to become the first alternate Pennsylvania dairy princess. But on her first day back to school after the pageant held in Harrisburg, emblazoned on the school's marquee for all to see was the message: Congratulations to Heather Riley—Pennsylvania State Dairy Princess Alternate.

"My teachers and classmates have been really terrific in supporting me," Heather said. They also found great delight in Heather's skit as a gum-chewing waitress. She's been asked to repeat it again and again.

Before becoming dairy princess, Heather had participated in church plays, theater at school, and chorus. Originally she became a bit nervous before presentations. The nervousness calmed down to more of an emotion of excitement, and now with numerous public appearances behind her, Heather said she feels quite calm whenever she speaks before an audience.

"Having them laugh really

makes it easier for me," she said of the advantage of being able to inject humor into the subject.

At school, Heather participates in Spanish Club, Student Senate, chorus, show choir, Cambridge Singers, and wrestling cheerleading. She enjoys horseback riding, walking, swimming, biking, softball, and most of all being with friends and family.

Unlike many dairy princesses, Heather didn't grow up intending to become one. Although she often admired the reigning county dairy princesses whenever she saw them, she didn't realize the opportunity would be there for her.

She helped with dairy promotion by serving as a dairy maid. That experience showed her that she really enjoyed working with the public. When she received a letter encouraging her to run as county dairy princess, Heather decided to give it a try. After receiving the Crawford County crown, Heather was eligible to compete for the state crown.

"Becoming a dairy princess is everything I expected and so much more," Heather said.

"I feel like I'm actually learning more from being a dairy princess than I do in school," Heather said. For the first time in her life, she's traveled to Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

Although she has pondered long about future plans, Heather has not made a definite decision. "My ultimate goal is to be a veterinarian, and I'd like to participate in the ag program at Penn State, but I also



"My grandpa is one of those farmers who never takes off," Heather Riley said. She is thrilled that her grandparents, Donald and Esther Closky, are at the state pageant to see her crowned Pennsylvania First Alternate Dairy Princess.



Heather in her role as a waitress.



"I had to beg Grandpa to let me add a few Jersey and Aryshires to his Holstein herd, but now he's taken a liking to them too," Heather said.

love working with children and the medical field, and I think of possibly becoming a pediatric nurse," she said.

Since her reign, one thing Heather has become more adamant about is having her own farm someday. "Even if I marry a city boy—I'm going to get a farm," she promises.

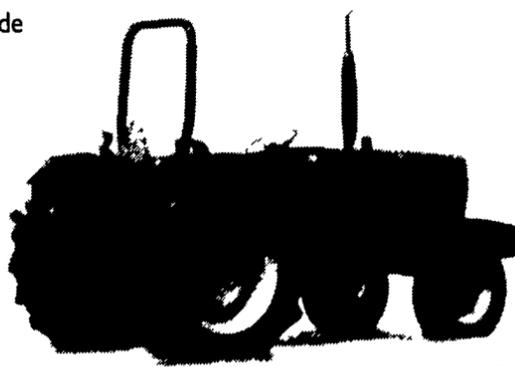
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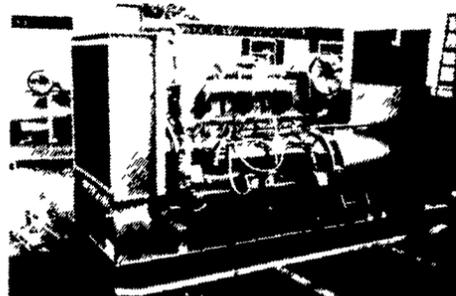


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