



To hold a successful annual 4-H Strawberry Roundup sponsored by the Rotary Club of Lancaster requires a lot of people working together. From left, Heather Fletcher and her mom stand in for second-place winner Chris Fletcher who was on a school trip; Harold Keller, auctioneer and Rotary member; Linford Hershey holding the champion strawberries purchased for \$300 by Rotary member John K. Herr III; Loren Hershey, Mrs. Hershey, Lisa Hershey, and Dr. Tim Elkner, horticulture extension agent.

\$300 Is 'Berry' Good Profit For Two Quarts

LOU ANN GOOD

**Lancaster Farming Staff
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)**

— Strawberries taste extra sweet this year. The berries also carried an extra hefty price at the annual 4-H Strawberry Roundup held at the Farm and Home Center last week.

Rotarian John K. Herr III of Serta Mattress Company handed \$300 to Loren Hershey of Kirkwood for 2-quarts of berries.

"I bid ever year but this was the first time, I bought the grand champion berries," Herr said. "It's fun to encourage 4-H'ers," he said of lessons learned in entrepreneurship.

Twelve-year-old Loren was out in the strawberry patch at 5:30 that morning in anticipation of the berry auction. He took care to pick perfectly ripe berries. "You can tell by their redness when they should be picked," Loren said. "If they are too red, the berries are overripe, and if they have some white on them, they are not ripe."

After picking 14 quarts from 75 Earli-glow plants on the berry patch he shares with his brother and sister, Loren carefully laid each berry on the table. He ex-

amined each one to make sure the berries showed no bug bites. Each berry needed to be uniform in size and color to pass the judges' scrutiny. John Yokum and Dr. Tim Elner judged the event.

Elkner, horticulture specialist for Lancaster County Penn State Extension, said this year's event had 21 entries, the highest number of entries ever at the annual competition.

After paying \$300 for the berries, Herr was left with the dilemma of deciding whether to share them with co-workers or take them home to his wife. Either way, the berries would be eaten one at a time, without sugar, cream or other toppings, which would tamper with the taste.

"I'm health conscious and prefer to eat them plain," Herr said.

Herr was especially pleased to hear the berries were raised organically without any spray.

"I pick the slugs off by hand," Loren said of an almost daily chore.

All entries were auctioned off to garner a total of \$1,575. Contestants pocket the money, some to be used to plant more plants and cover other expenses, some to save for college, and, "to help me buy my

cab tractor," said Loren's brother 10-year-old Linford. Linford received \$65 for his berries that placed third.

The brothers enjoy farming with parents Les and Lois Hershey. Loren gets up at 5:30 every morning to feed his 4-H steer, five pigs, and five sheep before catching a 6:15 a.m. school bus to attend Day-spring Christian Academy where he is in sixth grade.

A sister Lisa, 8, planted berries this year, but needs to wait until the plants mature to pick berries for next year's competition.

To encourage persistence in 4-H members for the project that takes two years of weeding, watering, and maintenance before seeing any monetary gain, Rotarians give a cash award to first year students who complete a record book. Record books detail expenses, labor, and a story about experiences. Traditionally two quarts of berries of second-year members are auctioned to the highest bidder. The remainder, members sell or eat.

Reserve champion Chris Fletcher's berries sold for \$200 to Rotarian William Heyn. Chris was on a school trip and was unable to experience the thrill of picking up the cash prize, but his sister Heather was happy to collect the prize and money.

"These are the world's greatest strawberry growers with their trunks ready to take back a lot of cash," said the president of the Lancaster County Club Rotary.

Leaders and parents volunteer much of their time to make a child's participation successful.

Participants included the following: \$50 for Jimmy Mullen, Peach Bottom; \$65 for Heather Fletcher, Mountville; \$80 for Jennifer Henson; \$65 for Lee Ressler, for Lorelle Ressler, and for Lynn Ressler, all of Peach Bottom; \$40 for Sarah Saunders of Nottingham; \$50 for Kenton Bucher, Master-sonville; \$40 for Josh Keener, Mt. Joy; \$45 for Jonathan Keener, Mt. Joy; \$45 for Rochelle and Laura Newcomer, Mt. Joy; \$55 for Andy Hoover of Lancaster; \$45 for Jessica Falk, Mt. Joy; \$55 for Melissa Brower, Quarryville; \$35 for Josh Keefer, Marietta; \$75 for Janie Leaman, Lancaster; \$100 for Paul Martin, Manheim; and \$35 for Garrett Martin, Manheim.



An ecstatic Linford Hershey sells his grand champion berries to John K. Herr III for \$300.

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