

Hara-Vale Farm Is Home For Maryland Farm Queen

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FREDERICK, Md. — For Emily O'Hara, Maryland Farm Queen, promoting agriculture seems to come naturally. Whether in a one-on-one conversation or speaking to a crowd of hundreds at one of the many functions she attends as the state's farm royalty, her conversation is infused with a respect and pride in agriculture that is genuinely contagious. Emily was selected as the state farm queen this past September at the Maryland State Fair in Timonium.

Her love of farm life is especially evident as she talks about her homeplace, the 200-acre Hara-Vale farm in Frederick County. One of her four children and the only daughter of Eddie and Kay O'Hara, Emily grew up working on the family's dairy farm. Her grandparents, Lamar and Mary O'Hara, live just a short walk down the road.

"One of the nicest things about living on a farm is that I know all of these animals; they're my best friends," reflected Emily as she walked out into the meadow one day recently. She was approached by Rags, a big seven-year-old Holstein. "The is one of the first calves I remember feeding at my grandfather's farm," she explained.

The O'Hara's milk about 70 registered Holsteins on their farm, but a herd average of 21,520 pounds of milk and 724 pounds of fat. Last March they upgraded their facilities by renovating their stanchion barn into a California style flat parlor and adding automatic take-offs. Emily has cut back on her farm chores since taking a job as a teller at a local bank, but still milks on the weekends. She keeps herd health records, and helps with the calves, too.

Emily also has a strong interest in floriculture and horticulture. She works part-time at a nursery, and also has her own business arranging flowers for weddings and special events. Her experiences in that industry add another dimension to her understanding of agriculture, and combined with her knowledge of the dairy industry, enhance her ability to articulate some of the diverse issues involved in agriculture. Currently enrolled in a business management program at a community college, Emily would like to open her own flower shop in the future.

For eighteen-year-old Emily, the road to becoming state farm queen started about 12 years ago. As not much more than a toddler, the dairy farmer's

daughter charmed the audience and judges and won the county's Little Farmerette contest. Emily said she was so awestruck by the farm queen that she spoke with that day years ago when she was crowned Little Farmerette, that she set her sights then and there on becoming a farm queen herself.

Emily proved to herself and a crowd of more than 120 people that she had what it takes to achieve that goal when she was named the Frederick County farm queen earlier this year. And she also made it clear that she has the kind of character and drive that will probably impress future generations of little girls as a role model of what an advocate for agriculture can accomplish when she sets her mind to it.

While she has maintained her ability to enchant her audiences with her delightful smile, during the past 15 years Emily has also been busy putting together a string of agricultural successes that has taken her around the nation and even to Annapolis, Maryland to speak before the House of Representatives and the Senate.

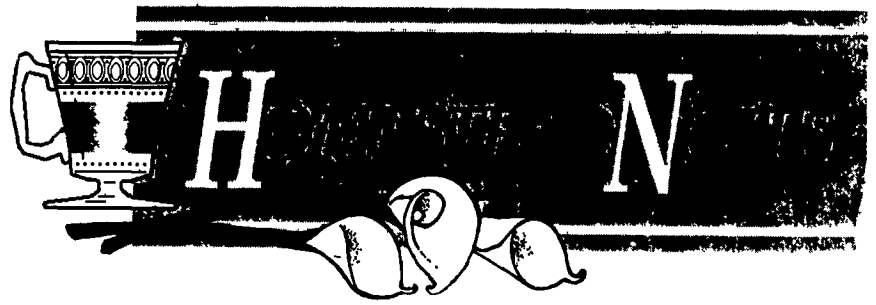
Emily's dedication to the dairy industry is evident in her reign this past year as Maryland Dairy Princess. Being state dairy princess offered Emily an opportunity to reach a wide variety of people with her message about the importance of nature's most nearly perfect food. She proved she could get the message across equally well to groups as diverse as school children and politicians.

Not least of all, she took her message to the House of Representatives and the Senate. When delegate Paul Stull, who was both born and raised on a dairy farm, sponsored a bill to make milk the official drink of Maryland, Emily got involved. She decided to bake cookies and pass them out to politicians, to make them thirsty for milk. "I started in the House, and I worked my way up and I made it to the Senate," she said. After passing out the homemade chocolate chip cookies, the politicians craved something to drink. The bill passed. "They all told me they loved it," said Emily, "and that's what made milk Maryland's state drink." Emily also testified in Annapolis in favor of the Northeast Dairy Compact legislation.

Emily graduated last year in the top five percent of her class of 470 at Frederick High School, where she was a member of the National Honor Society, the volleyball team, and was an accounting tutor.



Like father, like daughter. One of the O'Hara's four children, Emily, the only girl, took a strong interest in agriculture and is involved in the farming operation. Here are Emily and her father, Mr. Eddie O'Hara, in the barnyard.



Hara-Vale farm is home to Emily O'Hara. Posing with Emily at the farm sign is "Sunny" the dog.

She found time to be active in both FFA and 4-H, and distinguished herself in both. During her senior year, Emily was president of the Frederick FFA chapter, and was selected FFA state ambassador, an honor that took her to the national convention last fall. In 4-H her projects have included floriculture and public speaking. She judged

floriculture for nine years, and got to go to the national judging competition at Niagara Falls, where she placed fourth in the nation. She also enjoyed being a member of the 4-H exchange club, where she had the opportunity to travel to California, North Dakota, and Michigan.

This is Emily's last year in 4-H, and for her final project she has decided to show a steer for the first time. "I want to experience the showing side of having animals," she said. The Maryland farm queen has never shown an animal before; she has been busy working at home on the farm.



Emily with Rags in the meadow. "This is one of the first calves I remember feeding at my grandfather's farm," said Emily of the big 7-year-old.



Emily with some of the calves at Hara-Vale farm.