

# Marsh's Well-Brushed, Friendly Hogs Ready For Farm Show

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HONEY BROOK (Chester Co.)

— If you want to know why Tom Marsh Jr. is so intent on doing well at this year's junior swine competition at the Farm Show, ask him about the brush.

When Tom used to help his brother, Eric Olsen, show at the Chester County 4-H Swine Roundup and follow him to the state Farm Show, Tom's chores were simple: wash down the hogs. And brush them till they glowed.

Tom so fell in love with hogs as a result of endless grooming — and seeing how much money was gained through selling them — that he decided the hog business could be for him.

This year, Tom will take a hog to the annual competition, Tuesday, Jan. 12, at 8:30 a.m. in the small arena of the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg. The champion sale is scheduled Thursday, Jan. 14, at 9 a.m. and the hog sale continues at 1 p.m. the same day in the small arena.

Eric, who is 20 years old, has left his 4-H showing days behind. But according to the Marsh family, he has left behind a legacy on how to prepare and show swine for Tom.

Tom, 14, is the son of Tom Sr. and Nancy Marsh, Honey Brook.

Tom Jr.'s sister, Brittany, 7, isn't far from starting her own 4-H career — and also plans to show swine and, eventually, sheep.

For now, Tom has been busy preparing the swine for show.

"I get a lot of fun from raising hogs and learning to raise them better," said Tom of his experiences in the Chester County 4-H Swine Club. According to his father, there are 34 members of the club in the county, "the biggest 4-H pig club we've ever had," he said.

Tom Jr.'s mother Nancy Marsh is in her third year as president of the Chester County 4-H Advisory Committee and has served on the board about six years.

Tom Jr. said that every year he sells his hogs at roundup and places the money in mutual funds. While he is intent on saving for future plans, he remains uncertain about what to do — though a future in the hog business is high on his wish list.

Tom and his father rely on the expertise of M & M Zook Farm, Gap, to provide show stock. M & M Zook allows the hog finishers to take a look at two dozen of their feeder pigs before choosing four or five that could be potential champions.

Tom Sr. said that he wants to allow "four different sets of eyes" to inspect the hogs before they are chosen for the show season. "We have to be unanimous in what we like," he said.

Though this is the seventh year for Farm Show participation, Tom Jr. has always enjoyed the fun of "brushing the pigs, having fun brushing them down in the pen, getting them ready," he said.

This year at the roundup at the Romano 4-H Center near Honey Brook, Brittany, Tom Jr.'s sister, sold Tom's biggest pig this year — 254 pounds. He's been attending roundup regularly since joining 4-H.

Brittany won't become eligible to be in roundup and Farm Show until 2001, but she'll be eligible at the county roundup in the summer of 2000.

Brittany said she doesn't like the

size of the pigs, which can grow to 270 pounds before they're sold. They're big, she said, and fast, and "knock me over."

One day a photographer came to their house to take pictures of pigs for a pig calendar. Fortunately Tom Jr., who was about six years old at the time, was small enough that he could stay on top of a 700-pound boar long enough for the photographer to get some pictures. The calendar, pig rider and all, appeared in 1992.

Tom's mother Nancy, also a club leader, is from Havertown, a suburb of Philadelphia. Though she wasn't raised showing pigs, she devotes a lot of time to her family's involvement in 4-H. Tom Sr. serves on the 4-H board of directors.

Tom Jr. is fascinated by hog's behavior and how it feeds.

Since they put in a self feeder, they noticed how the hogs take to it. They also notice how a hog will dig up roots and leave the ground bare in their pens.

"But all the hogs are friendly," he said.

Tom spends a lot of time working around the hog — and brushing them lets them know they are being cared for.

As a result, the hogs are attentive and friendly. "They're content and easier to handle," said Nancy.

She said that Tom Jr. will scratch the hogs behind the ears when they're eating. "The hogs get used to you, and you can get them to go where you want to go," she said.

Tom Jr. won reserve champion light heavyweight at the roundup last year.

Tom Jr. is also involved in other 4-H projects other than hogs. His favorite nonfarm activity is working with the 4-H wildlife club. Using photographs from magazines such as The Trapper, Field and Stream, and Game News, Tom clipped together a presentation of foxes in four different seasons.

At last year's banquet, Tom won the Keystone Farm Credit Award winner for outstanding junior achievement in 4-H. At this past summer's county roundup at the Romano Center, Tom won grand champion wildlife project, grand champion embryology project, grand champion sewing project for his quilted pillow, and grand champion food and nutrition project for his homemade bread. He was the only boy in the club in which he sewed together and quilted a pillow, according to Nancy, who operates her own business at the house, Marsh Antiques and Quilts.

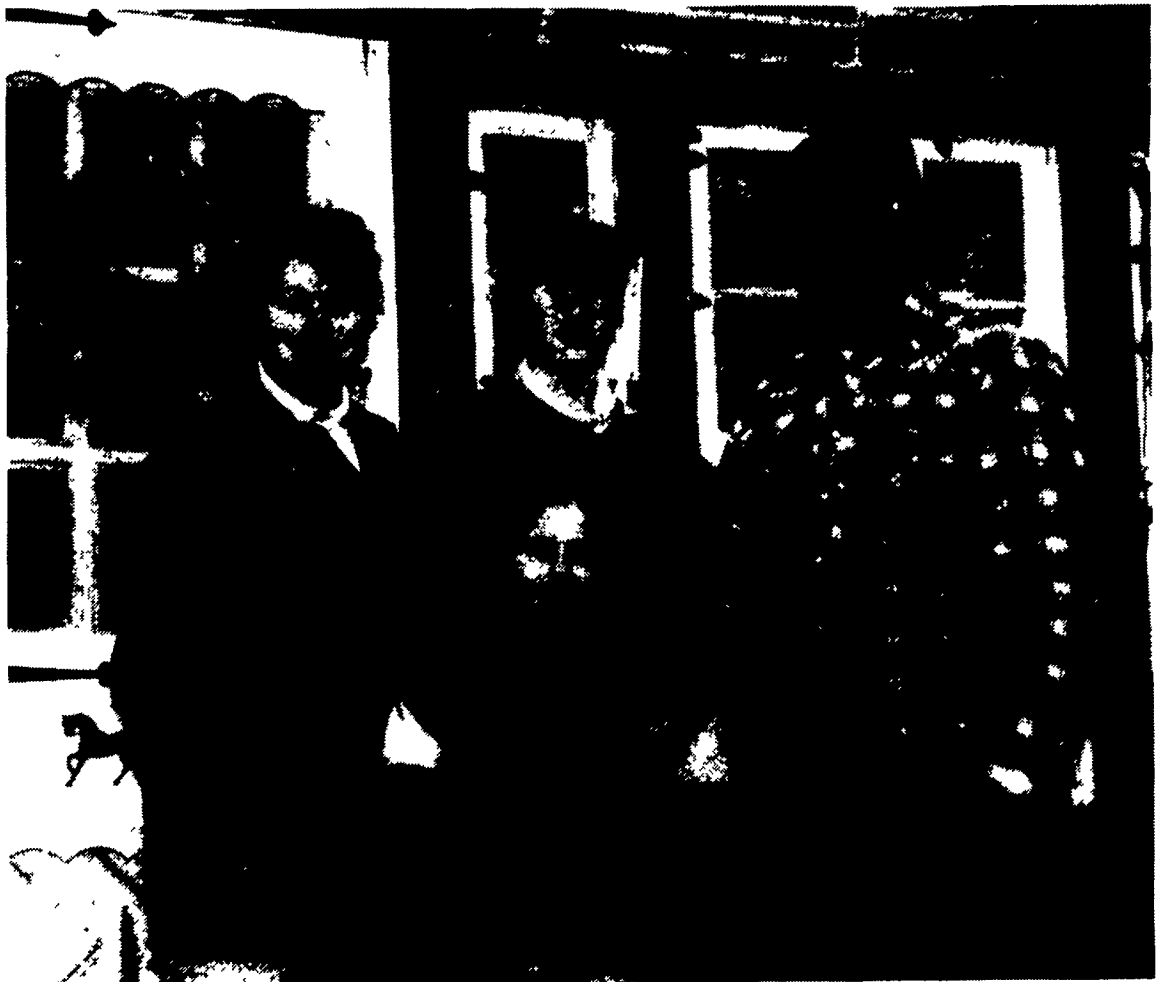
Using his expertise as a retired deputy wildlife conservation officer for the Pennsylvania Game Commission who now operates his own wildlife management business, Tom Sr. was able to work with a local farm to obtain quail eggs to hatch in the embryology club.

What is Tom Jr.'s secret to finishing a good hog?

"4-H tells you best ways to feed them," he said. "We mix our own feed."

They use shelled corn, soybean meal, and minerals with good results. But Tom Sr. also noted how important genetics are to fashioning a champion.

"If you have some of the worst genetics and do the best job you can at feeding and caring for it, it won't do you much good," he said. "But if you have some of the best genetics and do an average job, it



Tom Marsh, 14, center, plans on brushing up a hog to take to this year's Farm Show. He's the son of Tom Sr., right, and Nancy Marsh, Honey Brook. Tom Jr.'s sister, Brittany, 7, front, isn't far from starting her own 4-H career, planning to show swine and, eventually, sheep.

can still go down as a potential champion."

Tom Jr. entertains plans to go into the hog business someday but worries about the work and investment of money to ensure blood-tested, pseudorabies-free hogs. Tom Sr. noted that 4-H helps members to look at the economics and to be able to viably market hogs.

4-H also teaches members the basic business essentials and the tenets to running a company.

Tom Jr. is in the 8th grade at North Brandywine Middle School, Coatesville. Brittany is in the first grade at Kings Highway Elementary School.

Tom enjoys social studies/history, science, and algebra.

Brittany plans to someday show sheep, but enjoys canning and cooking and other 4-H projects.



"I get a lot of fun from raising hogs and learning to raise them better," said Tom Marsh Jr. of his experiences in the Chester County 4-H Swine Club.

## Apply Now For Jersey Scholarships, Awards

LIBERTY (Bradford Co.) — It's that time of year when Jersey youth from across Pennsylvania can stand up and be recognized for their hard work.

Awards and Scholarships will be presented to outstanding Jersey youth between the ages of nine and 19 who owned a Jersey calf, heifer or cow during 1998, at the PJCA annual meeting this spring. The deadline to enter these contests is January 20, 1999.

First year Jersey owners can compete for the First Year Project Award. To be eligible, a member must be between the ages of eight and 12 and be a member of an organized 4-H club. To enter the contest, submit the official project record book along with a handwritten story entitled "My First Jersey Project Year."

The PJCA will select outstanding Jersey achievers in both the junior division, ages nine to 13, and the senior category, ages 14-19. All applicants must be the owners of one or more registered Jerseys. Entry

forms for this contest are available from the youth coordinator. Five finalists from each division will be recognized at the annual meeting. Previous winners in the junior division are not allowed to re-enter the contest, while previous winners in the senior division are eligible to re-enter, but only to be considered for the state's entry to the national achievement contest.

Jersey youth of all ages are invited to compete in the scrapbook contest. Scrapbooks submitted are to include the contestant's Jersey project(s) for 1998. Scrapbooks will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of the contents. Artistic skill and creativity will also be considered. Yet another contest for young Jersey owners to enter is the Youth Production Contest. Jersey juniors can nominate their registered animals that are on official DHI or DHIA test by submitting official cow records issued between 1/1/98 and 12/31/98. This form is required to give officials a 305-day 2X mature equivalent value for the records submitted. The

records will be ranked according to mature equivalent pounds of proteins. Contestants are only allowed to submit one record per year. Top records will be forwarded to the National Jersey Youth Production Contest. Finally, Jersey Youth who are attending college or who are high school seniors planning to enroll in college within one year of high school graduation can compete for one of two \$200 scholarships. Applicants must have been actively involved with Jersey cattle for at least two years. Previous scholarship winners are eligible to reapply for these awards.

To be eligible for these awards, the applicant or the applicant's family must be members of the Pennsylvania Jersey Cattle Association.

Applications should be sent to Patty Rassau, Youth Director, 473 Monroe Road, Sarver, PA 16055 or to David Norman, PJCC secretary, RR 1, Box 30, Liberty, PA 16930.

For more information, call Rassau at 724-353-9681.