

Yorktown Spinners Top 1999 Sheep To Shawl Contest

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) - With Pennsylvania's First Lady Michele M. Ridge presiding the small arena of the 83rd Pennsylvania Farm Show was alive Monday evening with the sounds of sheep and shears at the 1999 Sheep to Shawl Contest.

When it was over, the Yorktown Spinners of York County had spun their way to victory, followed by "Penn-Wheels" of Montgomery County, and "Weave Made It" from Bucks County, taking third place for its creation.

Immediately following the contest the shawls were auctioned with the first place shawl selling for \$1,425, the second place shawl for \$550, and the third place creation for \$225. The Yorktown Spinners donated \$1,050 of the proceeds to the York County 4-H Sheep Club.

In finishing first, the team captured the "Weaver's Award" for creativity of the design, use of color and skill, and the "Spinner's Award" which recognizes the quality of workmanship and the spinner's team spirit and cooperation. The Spinners also received the "Team's Choice Award" as voted by other teams competing in the contest. Natlan Good, the winning team's shearer also won the "Shearer's Award" for careful handling of the sheep and exceptional skill.

Creating a shawl is an intricate process. Each time is composed of a shearer, a weaver, and three spinners who compete to craft a quality homemade shawl from start to finish. Three judges evaluate and score the teams on the basis of shearing, spinning, design of the shawl, weaving, speed and team identification.

The shearing portion of the competition is judged for speed, lack of small nicks to the wool, lack of cuts to the sheep, uniformity and shearing. The spinning portion is evaluated based on the individual spinning of the members and how it relates to the design of the shawl. They are also judged for fleece preparation, which may be done by all team members.

The team is then scored on the design and appearance of their finished shawl. Judges look for originality in design, difficulty of the weave, color coordination between the warp and weft, softness and drapeability and the execution of the finished fringe.

Judges look for evenness and check for errors in the completed shawl, which must measure 22 inches wide and 78 inches in length.

Finally, teams are evaluated on speed and awarded a bonus for finishing their shawl first. Speed coupled with quality is the goal of all teams. Teams are encouraged to create a theme that makes their team unique and makes it easy for the audience to recognize all of the members of one team. They are judged for originality of theme and their overall appearance.

In order to participate in this contest, the team members must be Pennsylvania residents and have competed or exhibited at two events prior to the Farm Show.

The purpose of the Sheep to Shawl contest is to promote public awareness of the contributions made by the sheep and wool industry to Pennsylvania agriculture and to provide an opportunity for craftspeople in the state to showcase their skills. Originally established as the Northeastern Regional competition, the "Sheep to Shawl" contest has been held annually at the Farm Show drawing up to 5,000 spectators.

Earlier in the evening, Secretary of Agriculture Samuel E. Hayes Jr., crowned Ashley Shollenberger as the 1999 Pennsylvania Lamb and Wool Queen.

The competition is sponsored by the PA Sheep and Wool Growers Association and is supported by the PA Department of Agriculture and the PA Farm Show Commission.

Chairperson of the competition is Karen Varner of Hershey, Dauphin County. Karen Strawbridge of Campbelltown, Lebanon County; Jean Flaxenberg, Elverson, Chester County; and Dick Plotts of Lock Haven, Clinton County, served as judges for the competition.

During the competition, members of the audience were invited to try their hand at carding, spinning and weaving. Blue Grass music was performed by Allen and Paul Kern. Scottish music was presented along with a demonstration of tartans and kilts by the Quittapahilla Highlanders of Lebanon County.

Genetic Evaluations

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. - Holstein Association USA is to release its next genetic evaluation in February.

The High Ranking Sire Report is set to be available on Feb. 8, when it will be placed on the Association's website, www.holsteinusa.com. It will also be available in the traditional format. The Top 100 International Bull list will also be available Feb. 8.

The Top 100 TPI Bulls list to be released by Feb. 12. Red Book Plus is also available for download to subscribers via the Internet by Feb. 12.

Pedigrees with the updated genetic data will be mailed on or about Feb. 12. Internet pedigrees will be available shortly after the genetic update is complete.

The Internet Sire Summary allows visitors to the Holstein Association website to look up a bull's type proof on-line as printed in the Sire Summaries or Sire Summaries Supplement immediately, as they are available.



Fred Brown, center, was presented the Ira Coble award for outstanding 4-H leadership during the youth beef show at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. Brown has been a long-time 4-H leader in Huntingdon County. With Brown is his wife Vicki Brown, and making the presentation is Samuel Hayes, Jr., state ag secretary.

This information will be available by Feb. 8 for \$2, or free to Red Book subscribers.

The Sire Summaries (Red Book) will be mailed Feb. 22. Locator Lists will be mailed by

Feb. 26.

A complete schedule of the genetic evaluation products available from the Holstein Association is located at their website, at www.holsteinusa.com.

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