

# Hard Work, Experience Go Long Way For Tobacco Champion

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— Grand champions don't have to do anything special, if you look at what Brian Rankin accomplished.

On Monday, the 15-year-old son of Barry and Kathy Rankin, Conestoga, took home the blue ribbon for his Pa. 41 wrapper tobacco at this year's Lancaster County Tobacco Show.

It wasn't anything special that garnered Brian a champion, according to the tobacco grower. Since he was "a little kid," Brian said, he's been helping to do what needs done on the John Wiker farm in Conestoga. "I helped plant, hoe, top, and strip it."

Brian, a freshman at Penn Manor High School, took the suggestion of his Manor FFA adviser Gus Birchler. Birchler suggested Brian take some hands of tobacco to the past year's West Lampeter Community Fair, where Brian placed second.

At his first-ever county tobacco show, much hard work and time, Brian noted, helped him garner the award. Nothing special in the way of fancy fertilizer or other type of out-of-the-way care was required.

Brian works with his father, Barry, on the farm of John Wiker, Conestoga. Brian helps care for about an acre and a half of tobacco, mostly Pa. Type 41. They also care for about 10 beds of transplants at Wiker's.

The past severe drought didn't affect the tobacco as badly as Brian would have predicted. The growers didn't use any irrigation for the crop.

For the second year in a row, Garrett R. Neff, 17, son of Dianne and Gary Neff, Millersville, won the blue ribbon for Maryland 609 smoking tobacco at the show.

Garrett, a junior at Penn Manor High School and Manor FFA treasurer, farms with the Neff Brothers partnership near Millersville, where he helps plant, cultivate, cut, and strip tobacco.

Garrett, who won best of show at last year's Farm Show, he said, noted the market right now is pretty poor for Maryland 609 smoking tobacco.

Garrett grew what he refers to as a "pet patch" of Maryland 609 in two short rows. Although the Neffs farm 6.5 acres of the Pa. 41 type, on the pet patch he used irrigation. The judges don't like to see pin holes and flea beetle damage, so Garrett used post applications of a commercial insecticide.

Judges for the show were Geoffrey H. Ranck, Domestic Tobacco Company, and Raymond Rinehart, leaf purchaser with Lancaster Leaf.

Ranck said the champion tobacco appealed to the standards of "uniformity and texture" in selecting the best.

Ranck said, "When you have had a year like we had, it's really something to come out with tobacco as beautiful as we found."

At the show, there was a total of 18 exhibitors and about 46 exhibits. The numbers are down from last year, reflecting an industry in decline.

The county show is a prelude to the state Farm Show, scheduled Friday at the state Farm Show Complex. Judge is John O. Yocum, manager of the Penn State Southeast Extension Research Center in Landisville. Judging will take place in the Farm Show Complex North East Upper Section.

Following is a list of the Lancaster County Tobacco Show results.

## LANCASTER COUNTY TOBACCO SHOW RESULTS

### OPEN CLASSES

Wrapper: 1. Gary R. Neff. 2. Adam Niesley. 3. Raymond Burkholder.  
Binder Class 1: 1. Stephen Knight. 2. Stanley C. Knight. 3. Gary R. Neff.  
Binder Class 2: 1. Dustin Mellot. 2. Lois Burkholder. 3. Gary R. Neff.  
Pa. Smoking Bottoms: 1. Jessica Neff.  
Pa. Smoking Middle: 1. Jessica Neff.  
Pa. Smoking Top: 1. Jessica Neff.

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Wrappers: 1. Brian Rankin. 2. Andrew Herr. 3. Adam Enterline.  
Fillers: 1. Adam Niesley. 2. Robert Garrett. 3. Garrett Neff.  
Binders: 1. Garrett Neff. 2. Allen Herr Jr. 3. Adam Niesley.  
Bottoms: 1. Garrett Neff. 2. Robert Garrett.  
Middle: 1. Garrett Neff. 2. Brian Rankin. 3. Robert Garrett.  
Top: 1. Garrett Neff. 2. Robert Garrett.



Judges for the show were Geoffrey H. Ranck, Domestic Tobacco Company, right, holding up the Maryland 609 champion, and Raymond Rinehart, leaf purchaser with Lancaster Leaf, with the champion Pa. 41.



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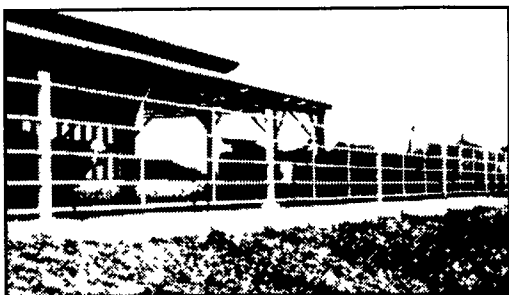
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