



The Richardson sisters are looking forward to their annual trek to exhibit at the Pennsylvania Show. Their "millennium" year entries include a string of 11 dairy animals, one Limousin heifer, and a pair of draft horses.

National Ayrshire Princess Loves Red And White Cows

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FAWN GROVE (York Co.) —

"The cows are my thing," smiles Susan Richardson, a young and dedicated York County dairy promoter.

And not just any cows, mind you. What this 17-year-old high school junior loves best in the bovine world are those Scottish-sourced cows, the Ayrshires.

In fact, Susan is so enthused about the spotted, red and white dairy cows that she has spent many days traveling the country, mostly at her own expense, promoting the breed as the National Ayrshire Princess. Susan won the breed promotion crown in July, the youngest of the five contestants, during the first-ever combined Ayrshire and Brown Swiss national conventions hosted in Maryland.

Winning the national princess honors at such a young age is just the latest achievement in a long string of accomplishments by this talented and well-spoken young dairy woman.

The daughter of Ruth and Charles Richardson, Susan began working with the family's Fawn Valley dairy cows almost as soon as she could walk. Along with her two younger sisters, Barbara, 15, and Tracy, 13, Susan lends a hand daily with farm chores, alternating evening milkings and tending to the young stock.

"I've been going to the barn since almost as soon as I was out of a car seat," she jokes, remembering her early affinity for helping with the barn chores. "My dad used to turn a bucket upside down so I could stand on it to put milkers on the cows."

But it was when she was about age 10 that Susan took a major step into dairy activities, joining one of York County's 4-H dairy clubs. For her project that rookie year, she exhibited a Holstein calf.

"I met some people at county roundup that first year who got me interested in Ayrshires," she relates. "I helped them and they introduced me to a lot of other people. But it took about two years until I was able to get my own Ayrshire calf."

Actually, it was two calves that Susan acquired. They came from the Lancaster County herd of Rob and Bonnie Wentworth, Quarryville. Along with Susan's family, the Wentworths have been very encouraging and supportive of Su-

san's rapid development into a dairy and Ayrshire youth achiever.

"My first Ayrshires were a March calf and a summer calf. They were the junior and reserve junior breed champions at the York Fair that year," Susan recalls fondly. The champion, Wentworth Farm Heidi-Ho, is now a 3-year-old and stands undefeated after three years at the 4-H state show competition. Her daughter, "Harmony," is Susan's first bred and owned animal and took junior champion breed honors at the junior district show this past August.

Heidi-Ho will be a headliner of the 11-head showstring that the Richardson sisters will be exhibiting at the 2000 Pennsylvania Farm Show. Plus, Susan plans to show a Limousin heifer, one of her numerous FFA projects, and Barbara is grooming her two Percherons for draft horse driving competition. In addition to showing her animals, Susan anticipates taking part in related Ayrshire-organization events, including a state breed meeting and showing awards presentations.

Susan's activities as a promoter of her favorite breed of cows began in 1998, when she was selected the Pennsylvania Ayrshire Princess. She competed for the state honor at the Wentworths' urging, promptly winning the opportunity to represent the state at various national shows and dairy-related events.

"But I wasn't old enough until this year to compete for the national honor and did it only for the experience. I had absolutely no expectations of winning, but just wanted the experience and the opportunity to meet some more people in the Ayrshire business," adds Susan.

Nevertheless, this poised York County dairy woman emerged from the application/essay, interview and impromptu question judging with the national crown, banner and a schedule of events that has kept her on a tight schedule. Susan was barely back to her Kennard-Dale school and FFA chapter president responsibilities when the fall show season got under way. Almost back to back, she participated in the state junior show, Harrisburg All-American, Madison World Dairy Expo, and North American Livestock Expo in Louisville.

It was during the World Dairy

Expo, though, that Susan's dairy skills were put to the greatest test. She was able to travel and work the Madison Expo with the showstrings of noted area cattle breeders and veteran showmen Dale Bendig and Ernie Keuffner, whose entries were housed in the primarily Canadian cattle barn.

"I had the chance to work with some of the most influential people in the breed," she says of the learning opportunity. "Madison is a tremendous show, and the quality of the cattle is so exciting to watch."

Along with representing the Ayrshire breed and awarding prizes, Susan entered the World Dairy Expo's popular junior showmanship/fitting competition. It was an awe-inspiring event for her, with 113 U.S. and Canadian youth in the opening lineups.

"It was a little different than showing the way I learned. At Madison, the judges wanted you to walk backwards," she explains. Susan adapted quickly and, when that field was narrowed to 10 finalists, she was one of the three young women chosen in the 10 to participate in a fitting runoff.

Ten heifers, washed and partially clipped, were tied around a large cattle trailer parked mid-



York County young dairy woman and cattle breeder Susan Richardson, is the reigning National Ayrshire Princess.

arena. Each participant had a half-hour to fit a topline.

"I was so nervous that I never quite got finished," remembers Susan. The winners were announced just prior to the grand-finale champion lineup and selection of the show's supreme titlist, in front of a packed arena of spectators. She placed third, earning a \$50 cash prize and a medal presented much in the style of the international Olympics awards.

"The call I made home after it

was all over was so neat. My family was really excited for me," she says with a broad smile. "Madison was a wonderful experience."

Susan had barely caught up on her schoolwork and farm chores when she and another favorite animal, "Yellow-Briar Ryan Ellie," packed up to join the Pennsylvania Ayrshire delegation to the Louisville, Ky., show in November. Ellie, a winter yearling, had earlier won junior champion hon-

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Susan Richardson's room is abundantly decorated with the array of ribbons, trophies, and various awards she has won through dairy and livestock competition and activities.