

Combine Disappointments With Achievements To Spell Success

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Lancaster Farming Staff

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Junia Isiminger knows how to be a winner and a loser. Well, not exactly a loser.

Instead she's learned how to turn disappointments into positive experiences.

Recently appointed as public relations and special promotions director to Pennsylvania Dairy Princess and Promotion Services Inc. (PDPPS), Junia brings multiple perspectives to the job.

She will be working with dairy princesses, alternates, and dairy promotion committees. Because she has served on all three levels, she is well acquainted with what works and what doesn't.

She also knows that many county dairy princesses experience the death of a dream when they are not selected as the state winner.

In 1987 Junia was the Crawford County dairy princess under her maiden name of Laughery.

"I was hoping to win, but I didn't," she said of the state crown. Forty-two contestants were hoping for the same accomplishment.

But only one could win. After the initial letdown, Junia realized that she could still contribute a lot to dairy promotion and also get a lot out of the experience.

She threw herself into dairy promotion in her county, and to this day she is recognized by many who recall seeing her at work in that capacity. She especially excelled in radio spots, newspaper articles, and working at both ends of the age spectrum with elementary kids and nursing homes.

It's also important to know that Junia had served the previous year as a county alternate.

"I learned to be an assistant to the team," she said. The value of assisting others has honed her people skills and has even benefited her during marriage to Mike Isiminger.

"In many situations such as in marriage, one is part of a team. You support your spouse in his or her decisions. Sometimes you get to lead, but always it's important to be a team player," Junia said.

As a county alternate, Junia had been extremely active in promotion.

"I wasn't planning to run again, but my dad (Ed Laughery) encouraged me to try again. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

That year Junia won the county crown and learned what it felt like to be a team leader.

When her reign ended, Junia did not resign from dairy promotion but continued with the Crawford County committee in charge of dairy promotion.

It's a position she never quit. She's kept active even while attaining an associate degree as legal assistant from Gannon University, in an eight-year career in the legal system, and in her return to school to attain a bachelor's degree in business administration. She will graduate in December, but has already assumed full-time responsibilities with PDPPS.



Appointed public relations and special promotions director for Pennsylvania Dairy Princess and Promotion Services, Inc., is Junia Isiminger of Crawford County. Junia, a former dairy princess, has remained active in dairy promotion since 1986.

Junia and her husband operate a dairy farm next door to the 300-acre farm where Junia grew up.

Mike did not grow up on a farm, but worked on a neighboring dairy farm. Mike and Junia were FFA members who met at the annual state FFA Convention, Penn State. The two struck up a conversation and became a couple when she was in 10th grade and Mike a Junior. They recently celebrated their 10th anniversary.

Because both have full-time off-the-farm jobs, they share farming responsibilities. Junia takes care of the herd in the morning, and Mike takes care of evening chores. With her new position with PDPPS, some overnight travel is necessary. This means Mike will need to fill in the gaps during Junia's absence.

Junia said that her preference for Shorthorns dates back to showing in 4-H when she selected the breed because they were easier to show than Holsteins. Compared to Hosteins, the breed is calmer, not as tall, but close in weight. Our farm is on a high hill, so Shorthorns seem to withstand the weather better," Junia said.

All the cow's bloodlines date back to her 4-H days of showing.

Recently the herd was thinned after a four-year run of heifer calves. While that is an enviable position, it also created problems. The Isimingers had cows they didn't want to cull and not enough room for all the heifer calves.

"We have only 24 head, but they are all great cows," Junia said.

Windswept Dairy Farm is descriptive of the farm where there is always a breeze, even during the calmest summer day.

Mike and Junia are active members of their dairy cooperative's young cooperative boards.

It is in association with Dairy Farmers of America's that Junia experienced one of the most thrilling experiences of her lifetime. She addressed a group of 2,000 at the first annual convention conducted by the association. It was the first meeting after four cooperatives had merged and exciting for her to be part of the planning sessions for the Young Cooperative Steering Committee.

While mergers and changes are threatening to some, Junia said, "We cannot just look at protecting our corner. Although it is wonderful to have our little cooperative, we are not being realistic to think that it will work. The world is global, and we must think globally."

In addition to dairy ties, Junia is also a county 4-H leader of the Interstate Exchange Club. Last year the members hosted a group from Minnesota. This summer, the club will visit Minnesota.

As a teen-ager, Junia was already portraying leadership abilities. She was a 4-H member for 10 years and served as vice president and captain of the Dairy Bowl team, a 4-H delegate to Washington, D.C. Citizen Focus, and a co-operative delegate member to Summer Institute.

Junia was also a former FFA member and served as county president.

Junia's responsibilities with PDPPS requires her to work closely with county promotion committees throughout the state and assist with chauffeuring and chaperoning dairy royalty. She will also be responsible for writing and publishing the organization's quarterly newsletter, the "Covmunicator," and recording and tabulating monthly activity reports.

"I'm really enthusiastic about the program. I absolutely love

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