

Daughters Share Mother's Love For Animals

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LITITZ (Lancaster Co.) —

Mothers, research confirms, have a profound impact on their daughters. Subconsciously, daughters tend to imitate their mothers.

Kim, 19, and Stephanie, 14, are no exception.

The two sisters are animal lovers just like their mom Sharon Landis.

"I rescued everything I found when I was a little girl — baby birds, stray dogs, and turtles," Sharon said. "Now I'm involved in animal rescue and pet therapy."

Sharon also leads the 4-H Just Kiddin' Around Pygmy Goat Club, where daughter Kim serves as a teen leader to the 22 members.

The Landis family of Oregon View Farm have a menagerie of animals and businesses on their 56-acre farm, which has been in the family for four generations.

Dad Jay and two sons, Ryan, 21, and Jason, 16, take care of 35,000 laying hens, 30 steers, and crop farming.

Sharon and her daughters feed and milk 50 dairy goats for their certified goat dairy. In addition, the female members participate in Australian Cattle Dog Rescue.

Sharon explained that means their home is like a foster home for Australian cattle dogs who are abandoned by their owners.

"We keep the dogs until they can be placed in permanent homes. Generally, we have them between two weeks and 10 months," she said.

Surprises sometimes accompany abandoned dogs. Recently the animal shelter asked them to take a stray dog, which they assured them was not pregnant. Five days later, the stray had six puppies. Of course, the puppies are easy to love and the family is finding homes for each one.

The puppies are a big asset to the family's pet therapy pro-

gram. When requested, they take puppies and goats to a nearby retirement home. Petting animals is considered therapeutic for patients and those in adult daycare.

After becoming interested in teaching dogs to herd, Sharon read a lot on the subject, attended a few herding clinics, and now trains other dogs.

"I'm just a novice, but I've trained several," Sharon said.

Five years ago, the Landis family developed a goat dairy almost by accident. Sharon had developed an allergy to cow's milk. Because they already had pygmy goats, she decided to add a milking goat to their collection.

Goat milk is easier to digest and doctors often recommend it for those with allergies or with other health problems. The children loved drinking goat milk and eating ice cream made from the goat milk. By word-of-mouth, others started asking if they could buy milk.

Government regulations for goat dairies are similar to cow dairies. To attain a raw milk license, water and grounds must be tested, and lab testing is required twice a month. The milking parlor must be built to state specifications.

The Landis family said they had little difficulty complying with the regulations and setting up the operation to sell certified raw milk.

They use a milking machine to milk twice daily. Milk is put into a bulk tank for customers to tap into their own containers.

In order to maintain a year-round supply of milk, goats are bred out of season. Most of the customers hear about the dairy through word-of-mouth or from flyers placed at local health food stores.

The girls take turns feeding and milking the herd, which requires about 1½ hours twice daily. When they first began milking, Sharon posted a sign in



Children and animals are nurtured on Oregon View Farm. Sisters Stephanie, left, and Kim, right, hold the puppies from a Rescue dog with Mom Sharon and the Australian herding dog that she is training.

the milking parlor to remind the children of the necessity of cleanliness. The sign reads: If teat isn't clean enough to put your mouth on, it isn't clean enough to put the inflations (milkers) on.

"They were a bit grossed out by the sign, but it had the desired effect," Sharon said. "They quickly learned how important it was to keep everything clean."

When led into the parlor, the goats jump up on the milking stand and munch on feed while being brushed, washed, sanitized, dipped, and milked.

Of all the animals, Stephanie likes the goats best. Everyone is named and the family said they have no problem identifying them. Each have their own favorite.

All the children are homeschooled until ninth grade when they enroll in Lancaster Men-

nonite High School.

Kim, a senior at Lancaster Mennonite High and vice-president of its FFA, will graduate June 3. She plans to work a year on the family farm and then take a two- or four-year course to become a vet technician.

Both girls are accomplished cooks. Kim explained that they had to do all the cooking and chores when their mother had to undergo operations for carpal tunnel on both wrists. It took two years, but Sharon reports her hands are as good as new now.

Ask Sharon which is harder to raise — animals or children?

"Children," she answers quickly with a grin. "If you become stressed, you can put an animal in a cage — but what do you do with children?"

On Mother's Day, Sharon will have a chance to relax. Her chil-

dren and husband do the farm chores, take her out to eat, and give her plants to fill her flower beds.

Here is one of the family's favorite recipes using goat milk.

Goat Milk Ice Cream

4-quarts

Scald 4 cups milk in double boiler. Combine:

4 beaten eggs
1½ cups sugar
2 tablespoons flour
½ teaspoon salt

Add 6 tablespoons scalded milk to mixture and stir. If chocolate flavor is desired, add 3 squares melted baking chocolate. Pour mixture into double boiler with scalded milk. Stir constantly until slightly thickened. Cool. Add:

4 cups goat's milk
6 teaspoons vanilla

Stir until combined. Freeze in ice cream freezer according to directions for hand or machine.



Richard takes a turn at tapping goat milk from the bulk tank. The farm has been in his family for four generations.



Kim feeds the Alpine goats. The 50 head are each named, recognized, and pampered by Kim, Stephanie, and Sharon.