

Kids Korner

Well-Written Essay Wins Adams 4-H'er A Calf



14-year-old Steve Norris is looking forward to showing his new calf, Erkye, in 4-H this year. Steve is a first-year member and won the calf through the Adams County 4-H Dairy Club's essay contest.

JANET WILLIAMS
Adams Co. Correspondent
GETTYSBURG (Adams Co.) — Who says dairy farmers don't need strong writing skills? Here's a boy whose writing ability won him his first year 4-H project.

The essay contest, coordinated by the Adams County Dairy Club, does have an unusual prize, but it is the one that is most appropriate.

For the past four years, members of the Adams County Dairy Calf Club have had the chance to enter the essay

contest and win the prize of a newborn calf.

Joy Hess, who helps coordinate the contest, said it has been a really good experience so far.

"Basically we started it because a lot of kids wanted animals to show and didn't have the money to buy one," she said.

The contest is open only to first year members of the club, so they tend to be 8- or 9-year-olds, just starting out.

To enter the contest, children have to write a 350-word

essay about what they will do to take care of the calf. They have to explain where it will live, what they will feed it, and also list the reasons why they think they should be the one to win.

The calves tend to be about a month and a half old when they kids get them.

Hess said they do the contest early in the year so that the winner can get a calf by the middle of April to make sure the calf is young enough for the youngster to handle easily. "That way the calf doesn't get too far ahead of them," she explained.

Steve Norris, 14, of Emmitsburg, Md., was the winner of the contest this year. His calf, Eryke, was born on March 7, which also happens to be Steve's birthday.

Steve doesn't live on a farm, but he has spent a lot of his life on farms since his uncle owns Waybright Farms outside of Gettysburg. The young man has made arrangements to keep his calf at a neighbor's about five miles away from his home. He goes there regularly to tend to the heifer.

At this point, he working on getting her used to the halter so he can show her in August.

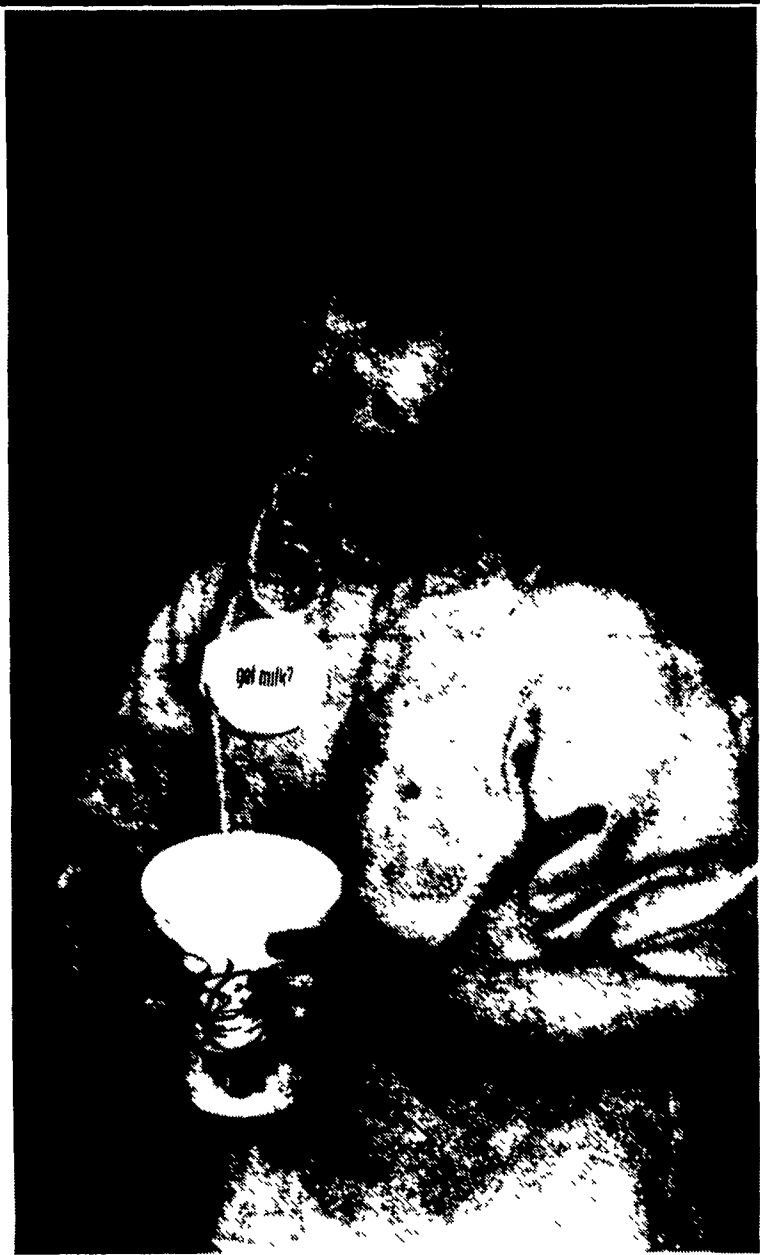
The animals given as prizes in the contest have been donated by local dairy farmers Larry Mummert of East Berlin and John Hess of Gettysburg. They were valued between \$500 and \$800 each.

"They're not fancy, elaborate calves," Hess said. "But they are something for the kids to get started."

Even children of active dairy farmers benefit from the program, said Tina Wilkinson of Gettys Acres near Gettysburg. Her son, Lee, won the contest two years ago. Although she and her husband's family are milking 210 cows, none of their calves could be used for 4-H.

"We don't show our cows because we don't register them," she said.

She said the program really helps the kids think about more than just "wanting" a heifer. "It makes them really think about why they want a calf," she said.



Kids everywhere are enjoying ice cream sundaes and milkshakes as the weather heats up outside. Remember that June is Dairy Month and celebrate by enjoying lots of cool treats made with real milk and dairy products.

Smart Stuff WITH TWIG WALKINGSTICK

Why are tropical fish so colorful?

The vibrant yellows, purples, whites, oranges and blues of tropical fish exist for all sorts of reasons, depending on the kind of fish.

Some tropical fish are venomous. The brilliant colors are an underwater billboard that signals to hungry fish that, if they want to live, they better munch on something else.

Colorful patterns also help tropical fish communicate. The distinct markings of schooling fish broadcast the group's location to any fish that might have strayed. Or, say a male fish is protecting a certain area. His bright, visible colors quickly tell other males who step across the spot. The boss fish's fancy markings might attract female fish to his spot, too!

Finally, the colors might be a form of camouflage. Some species of tropical fish have what is called counter shading. Fish with counter shading have very light colors on their belly and very dark colors on the top. When a predator looks at this fish from underneath, its belly's light color blends with the sun-filled water above it. Likewise, the dark colors on top hide the fish when viewed from above.

Still other species will have lines and colorful patterns that go through the eyes, camouflaging them. That, paired with a big black spot on the tail — called a false eye spot — is thought to fool the predator into striking the wrong end of the animal, and the swift fish gets away.

A lot of times a fish has several reasons for its bright markings. To find out more about your favorite fish, explore your local library or aquarium. You'll find tropical fish can be a fascinating, complicated bunch!

Scientifically yours,
Twig

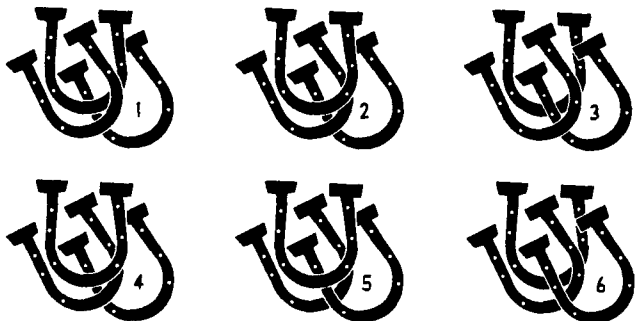
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OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
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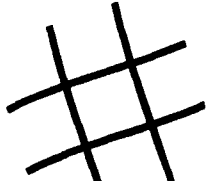
FIND THE TWINS

WHICH TWO ARE EXACTLY ALIKE?

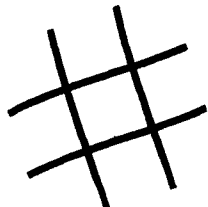


ANSWER: TWO AND FOUR

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