

# 'Stating It In A Letter' Proved Profitable For Fairbairn 4-H'ers

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COATESVILLE (Chester Co.) — When you want to really accomplish something big, write a letter.

Caitlin Fairbairn, Lisnageer Farm, did just that before the Chester County 4-H Roundup last summer.

In the hopes of getting business to bid, Caitlin, 12, took the time to write, in longhand, a letter to Jay Heim, HSC Contracting, Exton, to purchase her steer.

Heim, of Glenn Oak Farms, Glenmoore, was so impressed that he arrived at the sale and bid \$2.25 a pound.

It's those "life skills" that 4-H teaches — writing and speaking to people, looking at costs of creating and marketing items — that was indelibly impressed on the children of Bill and Cheryl Fairbairn.

Caitlin's brother Ryan, 11, wrote a letter in the summer of 1999 to Jim Herr, Herr's Potato Chips, Nottingham. Herr noted to Ryan's dad, Bill, that he was so impressed with the letter that, at roundup, he bid \$1.45 a pound for Ryan's steer.

Both Ryan and Caitlin will be taking some hogs this year to the state Farm Show.

Writing a letter is something of a challenge for Ryan. It took him a good 10-15 minutes per page for the Herr letter. For Caitlin's Heim letter, the time was easily spent, and she enjoyed composing it.

Both children sent "thank you" cards out too, noted their mom, Cheryl Fairbairn, who also serves as Chester County livestock agent. Each card had a letter — "C" for her daughter Caitlin and "R" for son Ryan — inscribed on the paper.

Each child will be taking a Blue Butt and purebred Duroc to the Farm Show. The hogs were obtained from Rick Pfautz, Lititz.

Caitlin noted that, originally, the Blue Butt was named "Jimmy" since it was somewhat small, she said. "It seemed like a Jimmy," she noted. Originally it was to be a freezer pig, but "it got nice and big."

So she "renicknamed" the hog "Frederick."

Why Frederick? The hog "sounded big," Caitlyn said. "It looked like a Frederick."

Ryan noted he and his sister have been showing heifers at the Unionville and Goshen Fairs, in addition to Keystone International Livestock Expo (KILE). This was the first year they took heifers to KILE.

Ryan placed third in his heifer class with a junior yearling at KILE. Caitlin placed fourth.

Ryan said he had the grand champion heifer at Unionville with a junior yearling.

Ryan's hog, a purebred Duroc, is bright red, so he nicknamed it "Mayflower." The other is called "Red Rose." (Its prior name was "Deep Rose," because Ryan and Caitlin like to change names with their hogs.) The hog was named in honor of the ship Columbus sailed on to discover America.

Ryan, in the sixth grade at Coatesville Area Catholic Elementary School, said his first year in 4-H, in 1997, he showed "Jimmy."

Caitlin, in the seventh grade at the junior high portion of the

same school, won grand champion her first year of showing at the roundup (then in New Holland) in 1996 with a spotted Blue Butt named "Pinky."

"I thought pigs were pink at that age," she said.

Caitlin and Ryan walk their hogs, when possible, about a half mile each day. They are also careful and "secretive," said their father, Bill, about their feed programs.

The feed is obtained from Gerard Nissley, Morgantown, a "big supporter of pigs at the roundup," noted Cheryl.

Every year, the Fairbairn farm is host to 4-H hog projects. Each year the number of housed 4-H projects increases, from seven the first year in 1998 to 18 last year. 4-H members clean the pens, feed the pigs, and other tasks as part of their 4-H projects.

Also, Cheryl noted that the 4-H members must also look over invoices after the sale, see what

the pigs sold for, and "do the finances," she said, to determine if the hog was profitable.

Last year, Ryan made the Farm Show sale with a fourth place and sold the hog for \$400, noted Bill.

Cheryl noted the excellent support by many businesses in the county at roundup.

Caitlin said she enjoys meeting the many friends at the Farm Show. Ryan likes the show itself and many other activities.

Caitlin has been taking gymnastics lessons since she was three years old at AJS Pancott, West Chester. She puts in four hours after school four days a week, including Saturday, to train for meets.

Ryan, a Boy Scout, has been swimming for about 5-6 years. The team was once called the

Rock Lobsters. It's affiliated with the Brandywine-Coatesville YMCA.

Ryan has been a lector at St.



The Bill and Cheryl Fairbairn family await Farm Show. After walking the hogs, they took time for a Lancaster Farming photo. In front are Caitlin, left, and Ryan. In back, Bill and Cheryl. At far left is Cinder, their 2-year-old Australian Cattle Dog. Photo by Andy Andrews



Ryan, left, and Caitlin Fairbairn with the hogs they plan to take to Farm Show.

Cecilia Catholic Church, Coatesville, where he also serves as altar server. He lectures every year at the Children's Mass on Christmas Eve. He's also a member of the school track team as a long-distance runner.

Caitlin enjoys riding her 25-year-old Arabian mare, Zena, named in honor of the TV warrior princess. Caitlin enjoyed riding her pony, Dixie, until it was donated to a friend, Laura Howe.

Ryan said going to the Farm Show is special because "we have a lot of friends there and it's really exciting to see them."

Cheryl noted the family arrives Sunday and stays until Thursday. They must leave Farm Show Thursday night so Caitlin can catch a flight out of Philadelphia to compete in a gymnastics meet in San Fran-

cisco during the weekend. This year, the junior swine show has been moved from its traditional Tuesday morning date to Monday morning. The junior lamb show is scheduled Tuesday morning and the steers, Wednesday.

The Fairbairn's Lisnageer Farm is home to 75 Angus brood cows and 200 acres of hay. They also keep a small Montadale sheep flock with four ewes.

For the Farm Show, one important stop is crucial for the Fairbairns during Farm Show. It's something the family looks forward to and cherishes. The family visits the Cracker Barrel Restaurant, near Prospect Road.

"It's a family thing," according to Caitlin. "And it's a time during the week we can be as a family, together."

## Make Dairy Your Final Answer At Farm Show

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Ring in the new millennium at the 2001 Farm Show, Saturday, Jan. 6 through Thursday, Jan. 11, here at the Farm Show Complex.

The Keystone State's dairy promotion programs, the American Dairy Association/Dairy Council Middle Atlantic, the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program (PDPP), and the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council Mid East have joined forces to cast light on the state's top-ranked agriculture industry.

"Pennsylvania has more than 9,900 dairy farms that produce 1.36 billion gallons of milk each year," said Debra Summerall, spokesperson for PDPP. "What better place to showcase the importance and versatility of dairy than at Pennsylvania's premier agricultural gathering, the Pennsylvania Farm Show."

Dairy farmers are invited to

visit the dairy promotion booth on the main exhibit floor, booth numbers 339, 348 and 349, near the McClay Street entrance of the Farm Show building. The booth has a fresh look this year as it cashes in on the popular game show, "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" and asks visitor "Who Wants to Be a Moollionaire?"

The trivia game will be played every hour on the hour and will allow contestants to win different levels of "got milk?" prizes, given their final answer is correct. An interactive dairy nutrition game will also be available throughout the week.

Farmers are also reminded to bring their postcard to the promotion booth to receive a free "got milk?" license plate.

Milk, cheese, butter and ice cream can all be found, in some form, at the Farm Show.

"The butter sculpture is a favorite for many patrons," said

Summerall. "This year we are excited to showcase a large sculpture than in years past. The new 10-foot long cooler will allow us to have a more intricate and artistic sculpture for the new millennium."

Land O'Lakes has donated more than 700 pounds of butter for the display and sculptor Edward Shank of Middletown will again turn dairy's golden product into a work of art.

The addition of the new cooler has allowed dairy promotion to get more bang for its buck as a new cheese display will be featured in the Food Court at Farm Show.

"The cheese display will fill in the product gap we have heard farmers comment on," Summerall said. "The new display will showcase cheeses made in Pennsylvania from our dairy farmers milk, and will remind consumers of the wonderful variety of cheeses available in the mar-

ketplace for their enjoyment."

Cheese lovers won't want to miss the creative cheese-carving contest, set for 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 7, in the Family Living Area. Consumer finalists will demonstrate their creative side as they whittle away at a five-pound block of cheese, donated by Mahoning Swiss Cheese of Smicksburg.

"Pennsylvanians love cheese and cheese is good for them," Summerall said. "A one-ounce serving of cheese is packed with calcium and eight other essential vitamins and minerals."

And who could forget the popular milk mustache? Farm Show visitors will have a chance to don their own milk mustache Monday, Jan. 8, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Family Living Center at the Farm Show building. Photos can be purchased for \$1 with proceeds benefiting the Pennsylvania Dairy Princess and Promotion Services.

## Glickman Announces \$13 Million For Rural Business, Community Development Efforts

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman recently awarded \$13.2 million in USDA loan and grant funds for 31 rural business and community development efforts in 19 states.

The funds will leverage private and other public funding to establish local business revolv-

ing loan funds and expand access to local health and community facilities.

"Many rural businesses have not been able to participate in our strong national economy due to the lack of available capital, expertise, or services," said Glickman. "Through the combined efforts of USDA and local

leaders, we will help open additional new markets for rural businesses, and ensure that future rural entrepreneurs can access much needed capital."

USDA announced that \$6.6 million in USDA Intermediary Relending Program loan funds will be used to establish or expand locally controlled busi-

ness revolving loan programs. The remaining \$6.6 million in Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program funds will be used to expand or create businesses in rural areas and develop health and community facilities.