

Kids Korner

State Lamb And Wool Queen Teaches Kids How To Overcome 'Baa'ed' Experiences

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As far as the Pennsylvania Lamb and Wool Queen is concerned, kids are really important people. She cares so much about them, in fact, when Deidra Smith — that is her name — meets young people, she intends to share the story of how showing lambs in 4-H changed her life.

When she was nine years old, you see, Deidra was a shy little girl. The first time she ventured into a show ring with a lamb, she did more things wrong than right.

It was a "BAA-ED" experience. Then some grownups who had watched her perform, suggested ways she could do things better. They encouraged her to not give up, but try again the next year.

She followed their advice. By leaps and bounds, her skills improved.

It's a pretty nifty thing that Deidra is 16 years old and has showed lambs and steers every year since that first "baa'ed" experience.

Deidra says kids who don't play sports in school, often want to compete in other ways. In joining 4-H and showing animals they will have that opportunity.

"A lot of kids are into sports because they like the competitiveness," she says. "But, I believe animals can give you much more than a ball can."

One of the benefits of 4-H showing, Deidra said, "Is that you actually get a friendship with your animal by the end of summer."

The first time showing may tighten the tummy with funny knots, but concentrating on doing a good job is key to not paying attention to spectators watching from the bleachers.

"Everything changes in the show ring," Deidra says. "You forget the crowd and focus on your animal. Win or lose, it's a great feeling."

"The first year is going to be full of new experiences, but if you have older people behind you and keep doing it, it becomes fun," she adds.

During the summer months, an animal project can provide a constructive and fun activity. Deidra explained that a market lamb, steer or pig can't understand the meaning of words, but, if spoken to, animals learn to identify your voice. They also sense the tone of your voice,



The Pennsylvania Lamb and Wool Queen is Deidra Smith. She will promote lamb and wool in all aspects to people in her state. Here, with sister Kelsie outside the barn, they are attempting to control the sheep, but Kelsie ends up in the snow.



Family support and the Somerset County 4-H program have helped Deidra Smith grow into a confident and competent 16-year-old spokesperson as the Pennsylvania Lamb and Wool Queen. From left, Gail Smith, her mother; Deidra, Dwight Smith, her dad; and Kelsie, 11, her sister, at the family farm near Glencoe in Somerset County.

which changes if you are feeling happy, glum or angry.

Deidra talks to individual animals as she would to a person.

"The animals learn to know my voice," she explained.

That is comforting for a nervous lamb in the show ring.

Deidra says lamb, as food, is very good to eat. She plans to serve samples of lamb to visitors when she appears at some important events in Pennsylvania and offer recipes for fixing great lamb dishes and snacks. People shouldn't be surprised when the lamb and wool queen reports other nifty stuff about the woolly critters.

"Sheep affects people in everyday life," she says.

Sheep provide wool for clothing and blankets, lanolin for lotions, and even chewing gum? Yes, indeed.

Also, sheep products are used to make buttons, gelatins, gel capsules, cosmetics like eye shadow and foundation, candles, soaps, and many other items.

In 4-H Deidra learned to make pretty wool clothing for herself. For her first experience in sewing, Deidra followed an easy pattern. Later, she advanced to difficult projects that were judged in 4-H Fashion Revue and the Make It Yourself With Wool Pennsylvania Competition.

The judges at Make It Yourself With Wool decided Deidra's garment was well done and should be in the national contest. So from January 25-28, she and Aleecha Jones from Loysburg — another winner — flew all the way to Sparks, Nevada for the big event. Going aboard the fast jet plane in Baltimore was tremendously fun for them and the family members who flew with them.

Deidra says getting away from being tongue-tied took hard work, but it was worth it to participate in 4-H public speaking contests. Her sister, Kelsie, at 11, is exactly opposite, Deidra says. Kelsie has a gift of being able to talk with ease to anyone she meets. Unlike her older sister, Kelsie has never needed to overcome shyness. She also shows animals, sings and plays instruments.

The sister's parents are Dwight and Gail Smith. In Somerset County the family lives in a log house surrounded by beautiful steep mountains, near Glencoe.

How Do Fish Survive In The Winter?

Fish are amazing creatures. They breathe air from the water through special breathing mechanisms called gills. These gills keep them alive in warm weather and even in winter, when top layers of their pond may freeze.

Most ponds don't freeze deep enough to harm the fish. Aquatic (water) plants, especially microscopic ones, continue producing oxygen as long as light can pene-

trate the ice. Sometimes, however, the plants can't produce oxygen. Why? Because deep snow may be covering the ice and that prevents sunlight from shining into the water. If this snow cover lasts long enough, the plants will begin to die. Oxygen is used in the decomposition process-oxygen that's important for the fish to survive. If enough oxygen is used by the plants as

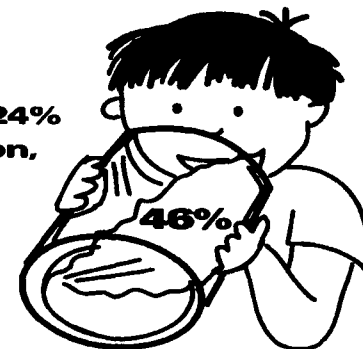
they decay, the fish could suffocate.

If you have a pond that is covered with several inches of snow, you may want to take steps to insure next summer's fishing season is successful.

It's important to remove snow from at least one-tenth of the pond surface. This will allow light to reach the plants. And if the plants survive the winter, so will the fish!

KIDS GULP MORE MILK

While youths (18 & under) represent only 24% of the population, they drink 46% of all milk consumed in the U.S.



Source Dairy Management Inc