## **'Berry' Great Prices For Strawberry Quarts**

## LOU ANN GOOD Food And Family Features Editor

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) - Prices for strawberries vary throughout the season, but George Kratzert's payment of \$300 for a quart spiked the high side.

"I wanted good quality berries to serve strawberry sundaes in my restaurant (Scoops Ice Cream and Grill, Mountville) and to

help out the kids," Kratzert said of his reason for giving the top bid at the Lancaster County 4-H Rotary Roundup.

Grower of the prize-winning berries was Mark Lefever, Quarryville, who was one of 53 4-H participants in the annual event.

Rotary members pay top dollar to the entrepreneurs, who range in age from 8-18, in order to "affirm young people and their commitment to hard work and busi-

ness ventures."

More 4-H'ers participated .in strawberry projects than ever before, according to Katina Showman, county 4-H agent.

Mark isn't revealing the secret for growing prize-winning ber-ries. He said, "It's a secret, I can't tell.'

But the 11-year-old did say that he has 100 plants of three different varieties. He entered Earliglow because they taste sweeter.

The son of Wavne and Janice Lefever put the \$300 in savings for a car.

Competition was divided into three categories. Nineteen firstyear members presented wellkept project books recording time, effort, and expense. In the first-year division were 25 entries, and 1.1 4-H'ers qualified for the experienced category with two or more years as an exhibitor.

"The bad part is that you don't get any berries the first year of growing," Jillian Fletcher said. Those first year blossoms must be picked off and discarded to ensure a better yield the following year.

Jillian did all the work of preparing the patch, weeding, watering, and pampering 25 plants last year without any enumeration. But this year, it paid off. The 12-vear-old received \$200 for a

quart of berries from Andrew Appel, a lawyer.

Her secret: "Don't have bunnies." She explained that her friend Megan Parsons grew berries, but wild rabbits devoured them, and Megan had none to enter in the competition.

Jillian, daughter of Michelle and Dean Fletcher, said her neighborhood has many dogs whose barking and chasing keep rabbits away.

"But my dog loves eating strawberries," Jillian said.

Fortunately, her dog doesn't raid the berry batch, but waits for Jillian to pick them and serve them to him.

Jillian's mother attributed the size and flavor of the berries to the compost used in the berry patch. "It's organic and we made it ourselves," she said.

Although this was the first year, Jillian entered, she had an older brother and sister who previously competed, and her mom is the 4-H leader for the Mountville 4-H Berry Club.

Kenton Bucher received \$100 for showing the reserve champion berries in the experienced division. Some of his five brothers and a sister previously placed in the top two placings. Kenton, son of Kenneth and Evie Bucher, said that he has 50 plants on the family's Manheim farm.



Wayne Kratzert paid \$300 for this box of strawberries. With them, he served strawberry sundaes at Scoops Ice Cream and Grill, Mountville. Kenton Bucher received \$100 for showing the reserve berries in the experienced category.

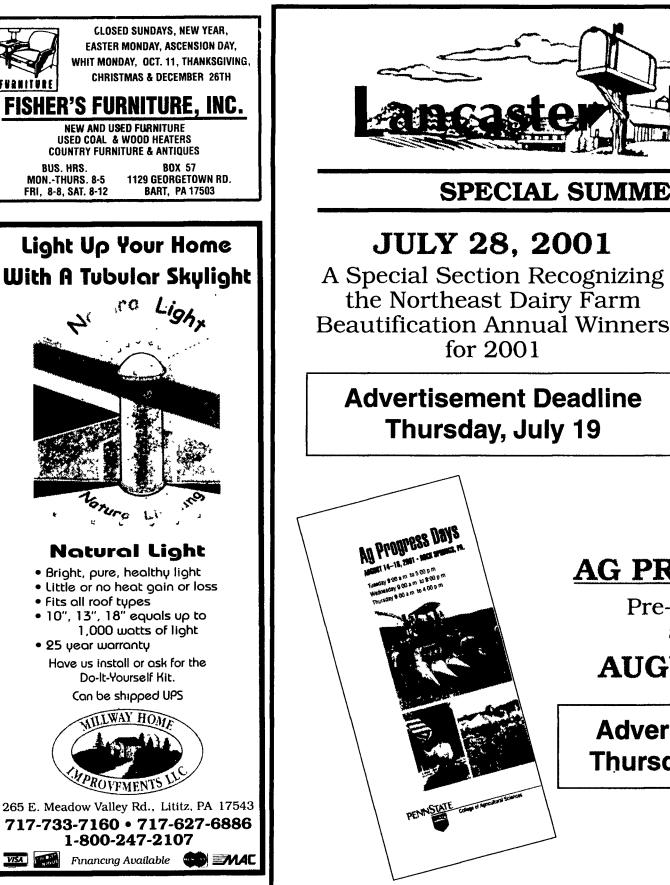
"Sometimes I get tired of picking berries," Kenton said. It's no wonder. He picked from 5 a.m.-8:30 a.m. the morning of the competition.

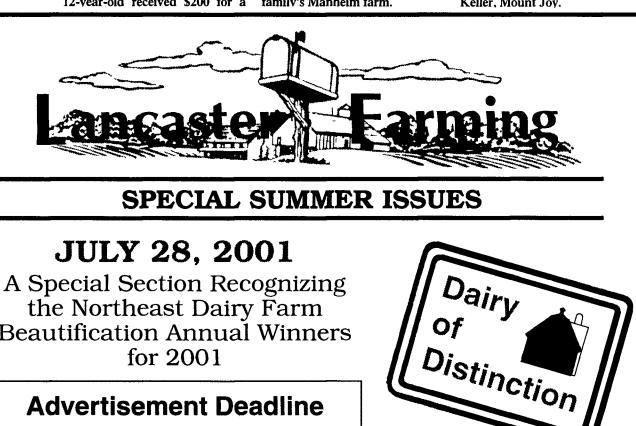
Josiah Rohrer, 11, placed second in the first exhibitor category. The son of Kevin and Audrey Rohrer, Manheim, sold his berries to Herr Manufacturing for \$80.

Judges for the berry and project book competition were Rudy Grove, Lew Middleton, and Gerald Groff. Auctioneer was Harold Keller, Mount Joy.



Jillian Fletcher sells her berries to Andrew Appel for \$200. Josiah Rohrer sells his for \$80 to Richard Herr of Herr Manufacturing.







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