

From 4-H To Farm Show, Brandt Sisters Have Show Ring, Showmanship Success

(Continued from Page A1)

the Elizabethtown Fair and the 4-H Roundup.

During the regular show season the sisters also exhibit dairy beef and are planning to add beef animals to their show string in the upcoming year. They are the daughters of Dale and Lynette Brandt, leaders of the Lower Dauphin's 4-H livestock club.

The girls were a part of 4-H before their parents, both raised on dairy farms, decided to lead the club. Both of them have learned as they led, thanks to help from other parents, family friends, and extension agents.

According to Dale, when Lynn first started raising sheep they had the lamb up to market weight by its first weighing — way too early for the show season. The family has come a long way in knowing about ex-

hibiting animals since then.

Besides leading 4-H, Lynette is one of the directors of the Elizabethtown Fair board. The family, which owns the farm in partnership with Lynette's father, Richard Alwine, milks 90 cows and owns 200 acres.

Lynn began her show career by purchasing three sheep "just because I like them," she said.

"The next thing we knew we had 30 head and we were showing them," said Lynette. The Brandts picked Suffolk sheep after noting the success the breed experienced in the show ring.

The lambs are walked every other day or more frequently starting in November, and each sister will take one market lamb to compete at the Farm Show.

While Lynn started the family showing sheep, Amy introduced hogs to the family four years ago. "That was the year we ex-

perimented — Lynn got a steer and I got a pig," said Amy. The family now has three sows, one boar, and a few gilts.

Lynn has now had the champion hog at the Elizabethtown Fair for the past two years, and Amy had the champion hog the year before that. The sisters exhibit crossbred hogs.

The animals are less labor-intensive than sheep, said Amy. However she does take them outside on the farm lane's stones "to keep their feet healthy," she said. She also "laps them" in the alleyways of a former milking barn to improve their muscle tone.

"We also watch the feed," said Lynette. "We check their weight periodically on the scales."

Although their father showed hogs when he was younger, the family has also used advice from friends who helped them pick hogs at the club sale.

The last few years Windy Hill Farm has been on the Scrapie program, which restricts where the Brandts buy stock, so they buy mostly breeding stock and show homebred animals. "We try to breed, raise, and show our own animals," said Lynette.

At each Farm Show the sisters hope to have their animals "make sale," since the top one-third of the hogs and one-half of the sheep are auctioned off while the rest go to the packer.

The Farm Show isn't only about show rings for the sisters, however. Last year Amy won a first place in her division in the relatively new young shepherd's contest. Scoring is a tally of a combination of Skill-a-thon, showmanship, and meat class points. She took home a first place in the youth sheep Skill-a-

thon that helped to move her to



The Brandt sisters plan to compete not only in the Farm Show's sheep classes but also hog and showmanship contests.

the top of her division. One hundred participants compete each year in several divisions.

Both girls have participated in the contest the past three years.

In addition to exhibiting animals and participating in showmanship and Skill-a-thon activities, the Brandt sisters sell Farm Show programs and help maintain the Farm Show's flowers for their 4-H club. Each year the Dauphin County 4-H Club, which conducts its roundup at the Farm Show Complex, raises money by taking care of the flowers during the event.

Although they live nearby and will come home to sleep, they plan to spend much of the week in Harrisburg, as they bring in the hogs on Sunday and stay through Thursday's auction.

Besides competition and working for their 4-H club, however, the sisters are drawn to the Farm Show because they enjoy-

ing friends they may not see often, besides participating in shows, Skill-a-thons and 4-H activities.

"The Farm Show is the whole package," said Lynette. "They not only do shows but in between they fill in with whatever comes up."

"They water plants, watch their friends show, or work on fitting — there's always something going on," said Dale.

In addition, the notched-up level of competition and greater number of competitors provide a challenge that the sisters enjoy.

The general public provides a good opportunity for education that is sometimes "good for a laugh," said Lynn.

"We are surprised with what they don't know," said Lynette. "We hear kids' questions coming out of adults' mouths. We take for granted that people have seen pigs and cows, but that's not always the case."

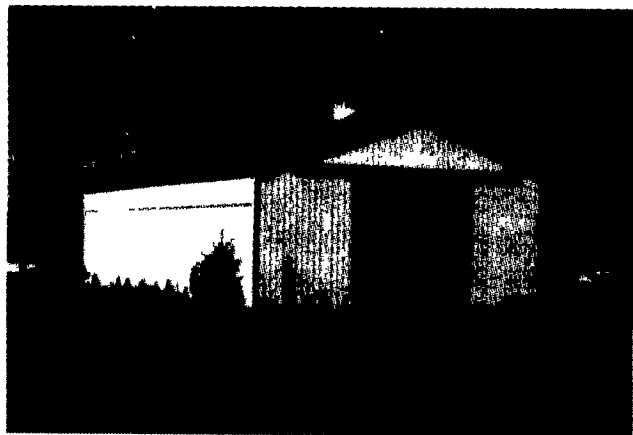
After two more years of exhibiting animals, Lynn plans to go to college and work toward an education degree. Amy plans to continue exhibiting until her 4-H eligibility is over. She is planning on moving toward a career as a small-animal veterinarian.



Lynn, left, and Amy Brandt are joined by their parents Dale and Lynette Brandt, leaders of the Lower Dauphin 4-H Livestock Club.

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