

Late Night At The Farm Show

What Happens After The Crowds Go Home?

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Did you ever wonder what goes on after hours at the Farm Show?

As you may suspect, with a large gathering of people and animals, the Farm Show does not really sleep. After the crowds leave, there's bedding to be changed, animals to wash, feeding and watering to do, — and best of all — socializing with other exhibitors.

Lancaster Farming stayed a little later in the evening to see firsthand what goes on after the crowds go home.

9:30 p.m. — Once the throngs

of people have left the alleyways of the barn, work can commence. Exhibitors pushing large wheelbarrows move straw and manure outside, radios continue broadcasting, and animals, as always, are in the wash rack.

By now most of the beef animals are tied outside, as owners take advantage of the fresh air and cool breezes of the tie-out area behind the barn. The animals spend the evening deep in the straw of their makeshift sleeping accommodations.

The stands of organizations and businesses are now quiet, as standholders left for home at 9 p.m. The space of the now-empty stands can serve as host to the cots that will occupy them later in the evening.

By this time of the evening, Kyle Whitebread, 12, York, has already set up his sleeping arrangements for the night. A hammock made by his mother serves as his bed every evening, he said. The hammock is easily removed in the morning for the next round of cattle fitting. Now in his second year at the Farm Show, Kyle brought a Black Angus steer to exhibit in Wednesday's competition.

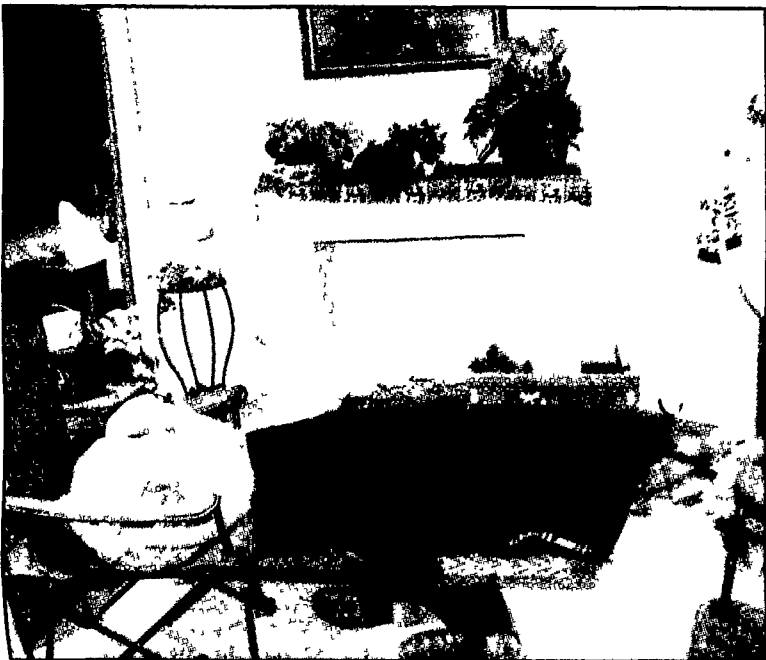
Kendy Gable, 17, New Enterprise, from Snider Homestead Farms, used the evening hours to wash one of her Guernseys for the next day's competition. Dressed from head to toe in rain gear, she protects herself from the water flying in streams and misting about the room. "I'm a wimp," she laughed.

Chris Snoots, 10, reclined in a lawn chair in the late hours, but "probably won't ever sleep," he said. Snoots, who attended the Farm Show to help his cousins exhibit dairy animals, planned to rise at 1 a.m. and begin to wash animals for the upcoming competition.

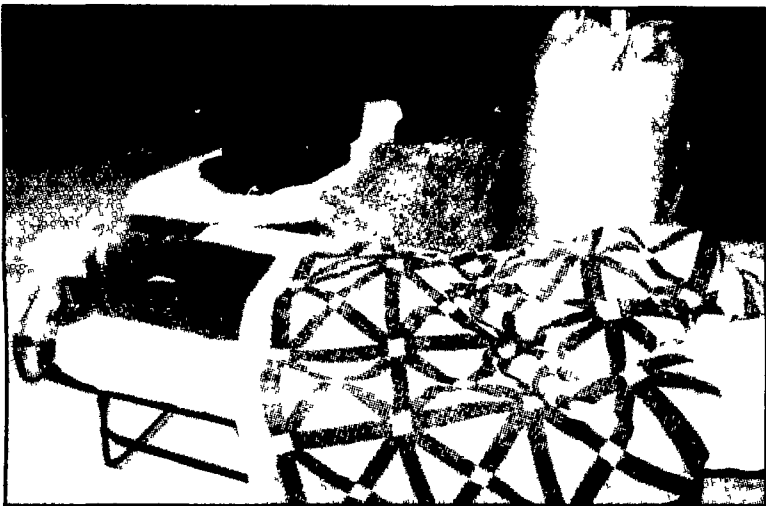
In the large arena, exhibitors play a pick-up game of football on top of the grids already in place from the evening's square dancing.



Kendy Gable, 17, New Enterprise, takes advantage of the quieter evening hours to wash one of her Guernseys. She often shows up at the wash rack dressed in rain gear. "I'm a wimp," she laughs.



Yes, this is a Farm Show scene. Although it looks more like a living room, the boots and sleeping bag give it away as a setup in the dairy barn. The stand is done by Trindle Farm, Mechanicsburg.



Exhibitors take time to take a boots-on nap in the evening.



By early evening Kyle Whitebread, 12, York, has already set up his sleeping arrangements for the night.



There's no reason to miss Monday night football, even during Farm Show week. Julie Cope, Danville; Dan Kenamon, Mifflinburg; and Steve Bowers, Milton; take time to relax and watch a little television.

10:00 p.m. — The large arena is still alive, with exhibitors taking the opportunity to acquaint their horses with the feel of the arena before competition. From a slim pony and small girl to the dancing paces of the dressage horses to the slick black Percherons, the horses were put through their paces during the temporary peace of the large arena.

Janitors pick up the trash in the hallways, and then begin work among the seats of the Large Arena. The Food Court, once teeming with hungry Farm Show attendees, is now quiet and getting swept and ready for the coming day.

A market steer, spooked by the unfamiliar horses in the arena, gets away from an exhibitor and causes excitement as he runs around the hallways and is quickly roped in.

10:30 p.m. — As the evening advances, rollaway beds, cots, sleeping bags, and even lawn chairs begin to fill the hallways, corners, and alleys of the dairy barn.

Not all exhibitors bothered to bring out their beds, however. "Tomorrow morning is the show, so I'm watching all night to keep them clean," said Aaron Gable, also an exhibitor for Snider Homestead Farms, New Enter-

prise. "We play cards, and sit around and talk," said Mike Creek, who also shows for the farm. "Most people have someone that stays up all night to feed and keep the cows clean," he said.

At 11:00 p.m. Michele Reasner, of Jemi Jerseys and Holsteins, wraps up her day by relaxing with beef barbecue from the crockpot, an appliance that is found among many of the Farm Show families' stakeouts. Reas-

ner appreciates the employees who work through the night and allow her and her husband to get a little sleep at the hotel during the night. The employees "stay up and

feed our cows and just keep an eye on things," she said. The Reasners brought along a special Ayrshire to keep an eye on during the week. The cow proved to be an attraction during the week as she calved during Farm Show week.

In the large arena, a Farm Show employee drives around a large piece of equipment which evenly waters the arena surface to decrease dust.

11:30 p.m. — Jason Mowrey, Nick Burket, and Scott Fisher, Hard Core Farm, New Enterprise, take the time to re-bed their cows in the evening. "We re-bed everything every night," said Fisher. "You can't do that with the public and the rule is that you have to have everything cleaned up and ready for the public by 8 a.m."

Since it was a show night, "we're giving them a little extra," he said. "We usually figure a bale per head with the pack in' ready."

Many of the other exhibitors, said Fisher, clean the stalls at 4-5 a.m.

By this time the barn has quieted, but there will be action all night as exhibitors awake to feed and water, then go back for a quick nap before the next round. Although sleep may be in short supply, friends, crockpot food, and friends are not.

Soon, in the small hours of the morning, the barn will again be buzzing for another Farm Show day.



Jason Mowrey, Nick Burket, and Scott Fisher, Hard Core Farm, New Enterprise, take the time to re-bed their cows every evening.