

Sheep-To-Shawl Contest Always A Crowd-Pleaser

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — For the 21st year, the sheep-to-shawl contest opened with a full audience in the Small Arena last week at the Farm Show.

The Farm Show crowd watched as the four teams each sheared a sheep, carded and spun the wool, and wove the new threads into shawls in approximately 2½ hours.

Following the completion of the shawls, judges compared evaluations and awarded first place to Yorktowne Spinners, York County.

This year marked the team's fourth year competing in the contest. This win was their third first place. Last year they took second place.

Second place went to the Penn-Wheels team, Montgomery

your sheep." Shearers responded by shearing the stomach area of the sheep — wool that is discarded.

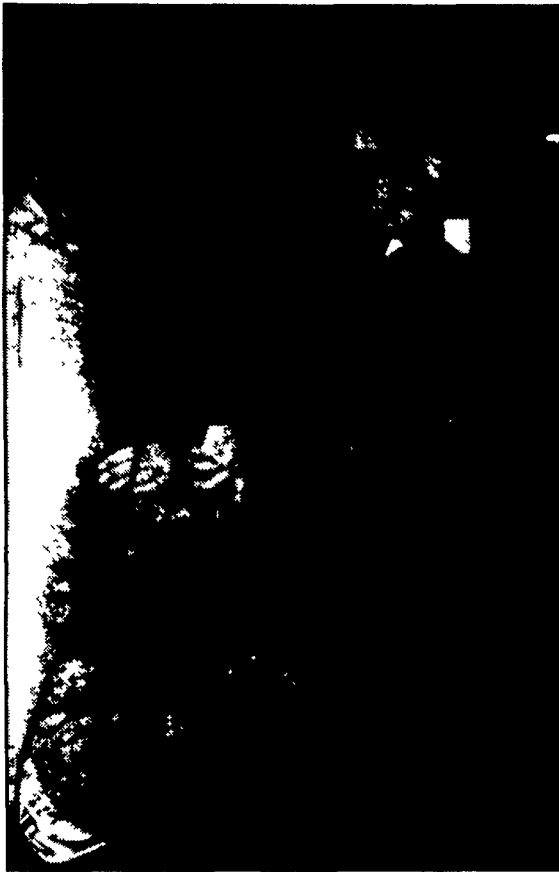
The Team

A Border Leicester again served as the wool provider for the Yorktowne Spinners.

"It's a good spinning wool. It's not really crimpy so when the shawl comes off the loom it really looks finished," said spinner Greta Dise, Glen Rock.

The Yorktown team also did well in the individual contests, winning the teams' choice award, an award decided by the competitors. Additionally shearer Nate Good, Windsor, took home a first place in the shearer division and Kris Peters won the weaver award.

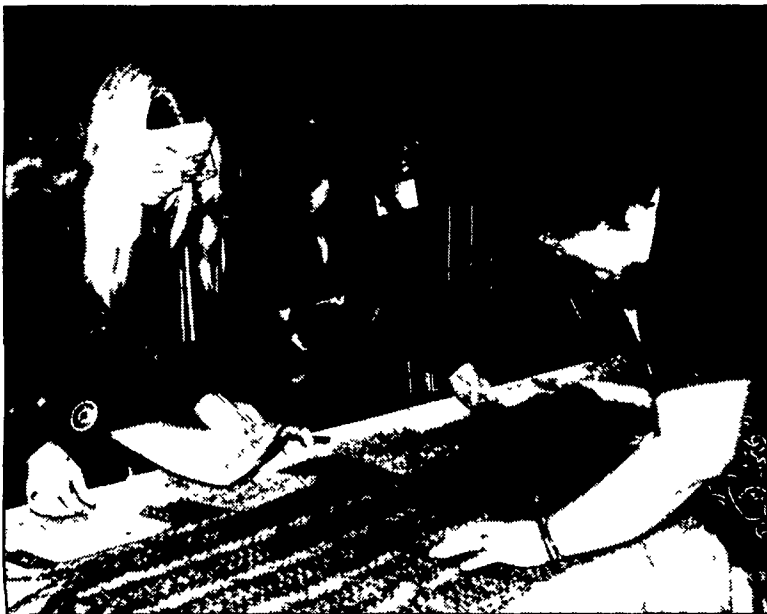
Team members also included Leslie Orndorff, spinner, and Sandy Britcher, spinner. The Yorktowne team traditionally do-



Shearer Nate Good, who has participated for four years in the contest, took home his third first place in the shearer division.



Stephanie Dougherty, a spinner for the "Ewe-niqueely 60 percent 'Man-Made,'" team, cards the wool to prepare it.



Judges deliberate at the end of the contest.

County; third to Kittens in a Basket, Bradford County; and fourth place to "Ewe-niqueely 60 percent 'Man-Made,'" Dauphin County.

During opening comments Pennsylvania's first lady Kathy Schweiker noted that the contest, one of the most popular of the Farm Show, provided a way for the public to see the wool production process from raw wool, still on the sheep, to end result.

The event highlights the contribution of Pennsylvania's sheep industry to the commonwealth, said Schweiker, who began the contest with a call to "belly up

nates a portion of the proceeds to the York County 4-H Fiber Club.

The second-place Penn-Wheels team, who also have four years of experience competing, used the wool of a splashy colored Jakob sheep. Weaver Wendy Chavin, Lafayette Hill, worked a traditional weave, the rosepath pattern, into the shawl. "We always use a Jakob sheep, since we like to use their natural color," she said.

"We like to do it (compete in the contest) because it's fun, really. It's a nice group — it's an excuse to get together," she said.

The team "Kittens in a Basket" consisted of members between the ages of 15-20 years old. They are part of the Cat's Cradle Spinners and Weavers Guild of Bradford County. The purples of their shawl echoed the color of the team's matching tie-dyed shirts and socks.

The team used a Shetland crossbred sheep to furnish the wool, preferring its long (more than seven inches) fibers for their finished product. Shearer Michael Horton took first place in the fleece division.

It was the first time to compete as a group for the "Ewe-niqueely 60 percent 'Man-Made'" group from Dauphin County. Spinner Stephanie Dougherty took home the spinner award. Three contestants out of the group of five were new to competition, said Dougherty.

Four judges, including a wool judge and a head judge, evaluate not only the finished shawl but also other factors.

Judging criteria includes team identification for the appearance of all members, speed and lack of second cuts for shearing, an even spin for the spinning division, originality and difficulty of design, and uniformity and errors in the weaving. Teams are also awarded a bonus for the order of their finish.

Harry Bachman auctioned off the shawls, also a highlight of the evening.

A winning bid of \$1,550 took home the first-placed shawl. The shawl went to Jan Frushone-Gibas, director of administration of the Bureau of Dog Law in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Sue Baxter, Perry Hill, took home the second place shawl with a bid of \$1,150. Mary Ann Schaeffer, New Bethlehem, took home the fourth place shawl for \$700. Dale Smith, Punxsatawney, paid \$400 for the third-place shawl.

Other Activities

Five participants took center stage in the Pennsylvania Lamb and Wool Queen contest. They included Mary Zeigler, 16, York; Jill Gevin, 17, Cochran; Megan Heath, 16, York; Angie Stump, Uniontown; and Lauren Ferringer, 19, Indiana County.

The contestants had previously

submitted articles for the writing segment of the program and

had completed the interview portion of the contest. The last part, public speaking, allowed them to present their posters to the audience in the Small Arena.

Lauren Ferringer, Home, was crowned queen at the conclusion of the contest.

Also during the event the Lancaster Spinners and Weavers Guild hosted the opportunity for

children and adults to try their hand at spinning, carding, and weaving.

The Caledonian Highland dancers of Bucks County brought ethnic flair to the event. In addition Melissa Weaver Dunning hosted the Scottish wool waulking and traditional ballads of England.

"Waulking the wool," which volunteers did during a multi-versed song, shrinks and makes the wool more watertight.



The winning Yorktowne Spinners team included, from left, Greta Dise, Kris Peters, Leslie Orndorf, Sandy Britcher, and Nate Good.



The youth team of Kittens in a Basket entered the contest for the first time this year.



The looms are ready for the newly spun wool at the onset of the contest.