

Brothersvalley FFA Takes Top Honors

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it notes: "As we read your essay, it reminded each of us about what FFA and obtaining new goals really mean. You are correct when stating it's more than the barbecues, CDEs, and showing livestock. It is the people, other members, advisers, and all we come in contact with that make this great organization of ours so special."

Hartman's future goals include being a state FFA officer and competing at nationals in public speaking. She believes that the Berlin FFA is a thriving club because of Doyle Paul's leadership over the years and now Mr. Clark's ability to continue the program with enthusiasm.

"I never liked doing housework and I've always been a little bit of a tomboy. I love the outdoors," she said with a laugh. "I watched my brothers (Brian and Bruce) in FFA and I couldn't wait to join. FFA is family. It's comfortable and we all help each other." In addition to the demonstration team, the safety team, consisting of Becca Hittie, Luke Horning, Joe Knotts, and Blake Weigle, com-

peted against three other teams to win the state title.

"It takes dedication but it's fun and a rewarding experience," said Becca Hittie, chairman on the safety quiz team and also the chapter's assistant reporter.

Becca said that her team practiced at least 10 hours together before the state competition. "It helps to learn how to work as a team," she said.

The safety team answer questions about farm safety as a team, much like a scholastic quiz competition. The safety team started practicing in July and competed at Ag Progress Days in August at Penn State.

"I'd do anything for FFA," said Hittie, who has plans to work in the dairy industry after her high school graduation. "It's a great club and a great experience."

Hittie said she has learned a great deal from agricultural education and hopes to become more active in FFA's parliamentary procedure.

"If it wasn't for the farmers, where would your eggs, meat and milk come from? A lot of kids don't think about that.

They think it grows on the store shelf," said Hittie.

In addition to the state competitions, Berlin received honors at the 73rd annual Pennsylvania FFA Mid-Winter Convention. David Bittner, Jenny Fisher, Rebekah Fox, and Stephanie Hartman received their Keystone degrees.

Jeff and Kathy Fisher, parents of Jenny Fisher, received the honorary Keystone Degree for having three children (Brian in 1998, Becca in 1999, and Jenny in 2002) earn a Keystone Degree.

Agriculture teacher Michael Clark couldn't be happier that as a first-year teacher, his students have received high honors. Clark is originally from Perry County in central Pennsylvania and is a 2001 graduate of Penn State University. While at West Perry High School, he served as the 1996 state FFA vice president and was also a State Star Farmer.

"I am excited to be here and to be a part of the program," said Clark. "I feel good about these students and the way they represent themselves and their chapter. They are dedicated."

He explained that the safety and demonstration teams practiced for their state competitions, even over Christmas break, and were very serious about being prepared.

Although oftentimes agriculture clubs have dwindled in numbers and interest, the Berlin Chapter has grown in the past few years. At Berlin, there are 70 members, with 33 members in eighth grade alone. It is one of the biggest clubs in the high school.

"So far, it seems to be a smooth transition," said Clark, referring to the ag program

going from Doyle Paul's overseeing to his own. "Mr. Paul has been here for many years and he has been a mentor to me." Clark believes that agricultural education is essential because the future productivity of the nation depends on the farmer.

"Whether we live on a farm or not, we are a part of agriculture every day and oftentimes we don't even know it," said Clark. "The population is growing and the farms are decreasing. As a teacher, I instruct students to think about what we need to do as an industry and how we need to change and at the same time provide food for everyone."

2003 Pa. Farm Show

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feet.

The project also includes building renovations and construction of a second multipurpose arena, a new equine center, a two-level concourse connecting all of the new construction with the existing facility, and a new parking area.

"The Farm Show Complex will be a hub of activity 12 months of the year," Hayes said.

"This is good for agriculture. This is good for the friends of agriculture. We look forward to starting next year with an expanded Farm Show with more days, events, and exhibits than ever before."

Agriculture is Pennsylvania's No. 1 industry, employing more than 800,000 people and contributing \$44 billion to the state's annual economy.

Holstein Association Plans

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ing began in the 1940s in the state, with the New Jersey Cooperative Artificial Breeding Association.

Entrance to the convention and trade show are free, but sign-up is required by May 15. More information will be available at a later date.

Scheduled is a reception with National Holstein President Joann Hartman, Waterloo, Ill. General sessions will be conducted midweek, with the luncheon and banquet at the end of the week. The Outstanding Young Farmer Award will be presented at the general session Thursday. The banquet will be a "wrap-up" event, a chance to renew friendships.

The convention will provide attendees from around the country with message that New Jersey is "alive, vibrant, an exciting place with a healthy ag industry," said Valen, "and a fun place to visit."

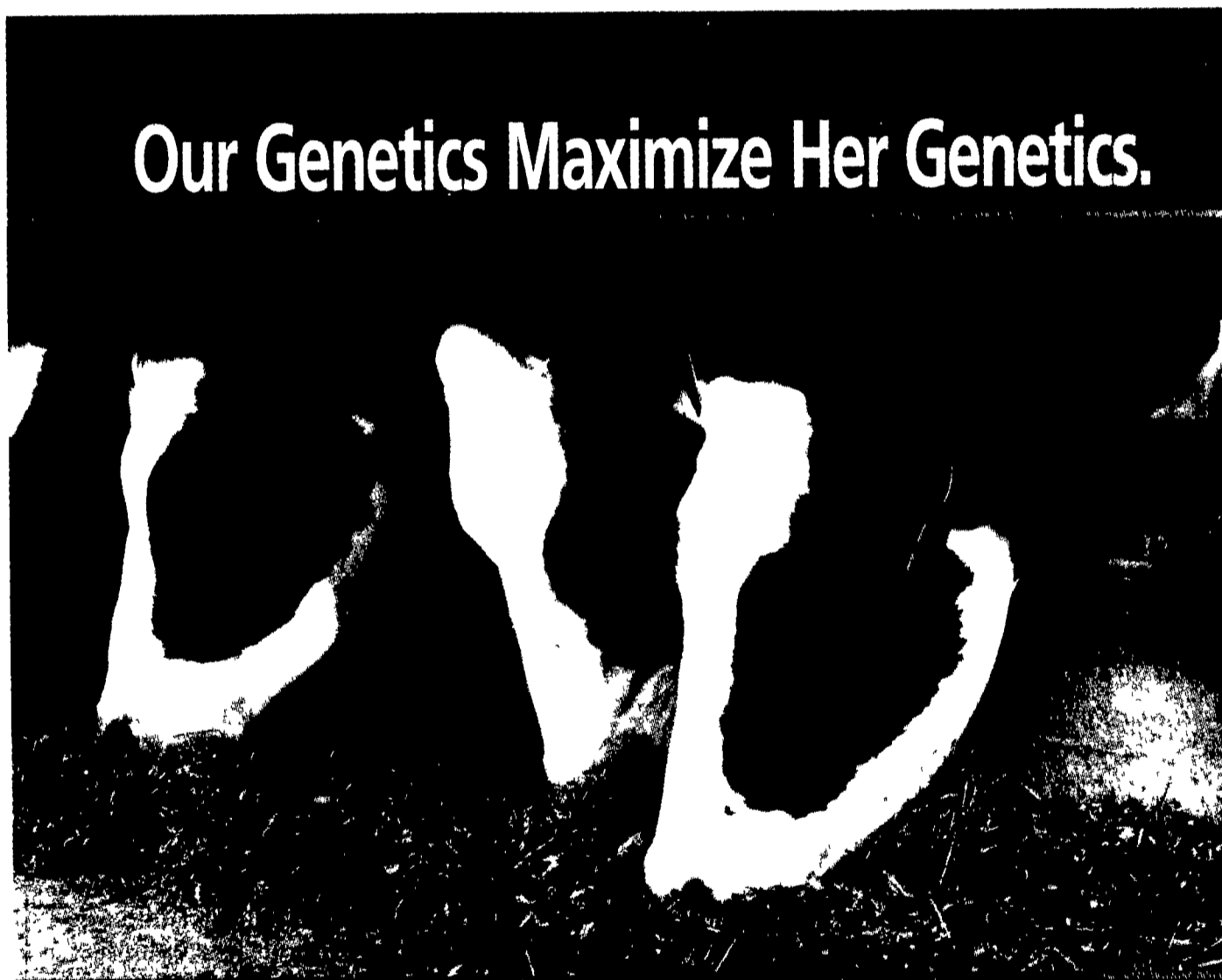
The association still needs volunteers to sign up in almost every facet of the convention schedule.

But Valen assured members at the meeting last Saturday that "you are going to be really pleased from a financial standpoint that we did this," he said.



Heidi Spencer, state alternative, left, provides dairy treats at the state Holstein annual meeting in Ringoes, N.J.

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