

Hempfield Area 4-H'er On Strawberry Winning Streak

Heald Honored As Dairy Innovator, Team Player

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Heaping boxes of sweet strawberries grown by Lancaster County youth were available for purchase at the Rotary Club and 4-H Strawberry Roundup here Wednesday.

Jill Fletcher, a 7th grader in the Hempfield School District, raised the grand champion box of succulent 'Earliglo' fruit in the sideyard of her home on Spring Valley Road.

Tim Peters of Lancaster bought the prize berries for \$270.

It was the second time in as many years that Fletcher exhibited champion strawberries at the annual roundup. Last year, she claimed top box in the first-time exhibitor division.

Fletcher said she "bunny-proofed" her strawberry plants by constructing a fence with a jagged edge around the perimeter of the patch. She also uses row covers to protect the berries.

Some of the berry money will go toward her college fund and the rest will be for spending, Fletcher said.

She has reaped the benefits of having several accomplished strawberry growers in the family. Older sister, Heather, and brother, Chris, have exhibited prize-winning berries in the past at the roundup. Jill's father is Dan Fletcher, and her mother, Michelle, serves as Mountville Community 4-H strawberry project leader.

Virginia Maness, Lititz, had champion entry in the first-year exhibitor category, Donald Peters purchasing her strawberries for \$275.

Katie Theis of Mount Joy won reserve champion in the experienced exhibitor division, receiving \$150 from Hess Catering.

Emily Stehman, Manheim, brought the reserve champion entry in the first-time division. Emanuel Peters purchased her berries for \$85.

A total of 58 youth from various parts of Lancaster County participated in the roundup, including 21 just starting out with project books, according to 4-H coordinator Katina Showman.

Harold Keller of Mount Joy was auctioneer for the day.

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UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Dr. Bill Heald grew up working on his grandfather's Chester County farm and went on to become a major force shaping the dairy business in Pennsylvania.

Heald's friends, family, and colleagues gathered here last week to honor him with a reception for his retirement from Penn State as professor of dairy science.

The West Grove native said he was 8 years old when he first climbed onto his grandfather's tractor and discovered his feet couldn't reach the clutch and brake pedals. Nevertheless, he knew he wanted a life in agriculture.

A passion for learning and dairy science took him to Penn State, the University of New Hampshire, and Virginia Tech, where he earned his doctorate in 1969. He engaged in various research projects and taught at Virginia Tech before returning to Penn State as professor in the early 1980s.

All the while, he remained involved in his family's dairy operation as "observer and casual adviser," he said. Their herd has expanded from 50 cows to more than 600 — and still growing — through three intergenerational transfers. This progressive dairy serves as an example of Heald's influence on farms across the state.

Among Heald's achievements was his role in starting the Dairy Stakeholders of Pennsylvania and the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania. Launched seven years ago, these organizations have been a strong force in promoting a more efficient and competitive dairy industry in the state.

Terry Etherton, Penn State

dairy and animal science department head, said Heald demonstrates a creativity beyond the intelligence and persistence required for his position.

"He tends to think in a way that is very imaginative," Etherton said.

Much of Heald's extension work at Penn State focused on production records and computer-assisted information management, especially in the area of milk quality control. He helped discover a connection between somatic cell counts and milk production, developed the first Mastitis Expert system, and helped transform DHIA data management.

Heald has served as interim

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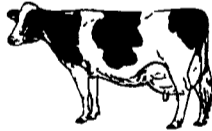
Anticipating a treat, Tim Peters purchased this grand champion box of strawberries from Jill Fletcher at the annual Rotary Club and 4-H Strawberry Roundup.



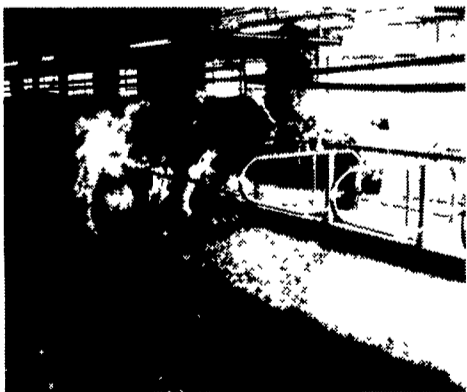
Dr. Bill Heald is retiring from Penn State's department of dairy and animal science. First at Virginia Tech, then throughout the past two decades at Penn State, he has made significant contributions in the areas of integrated dairy management, recordkeeping, and milk quality control. Photo by Dave Lefever

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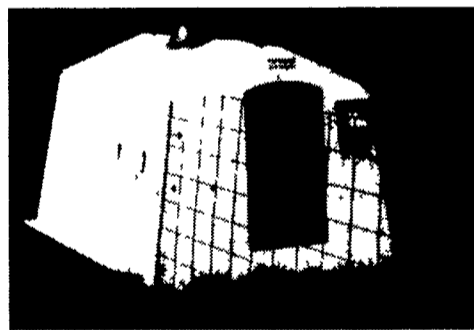
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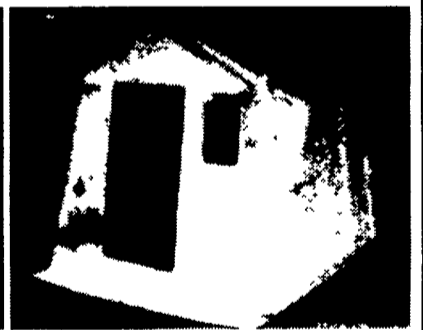
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