

# Fawnridge Farms A Family Affair

(Continued from Page A1)

Besides having strong ties as siblings, they "have met really neat kids, and have made a lot of friendships through farm organizations," she said.

Keith's parents also help occasionally with the milking.

The shared workload has forced the Treichler children to be responsible, according to Keith. "We couldn't have asked for better kids," said Sue.

Along with their cousins, the Treichler children help to make breeding decisions, fill silos, stack hay and straw, drive the wagons, and milk, among other farm jobs. The family does all of their own fieldwork except for crop spraying.

Besides farming, the family spends time together hunting or fishing. Brittini is ready for her first hunting season after receiving a gun for Christmas. Fishing and hunting are other family activities.

Although dairy farming leaves little room for vacations ("that goes with the career," Sue said), day trips and recreational activities such as hunting or fishing fit the bill for fun.

The family also enjoys a good working relationship with Keith's parents, Feryl and Jane Treichler, who live in the farmhouse on the premises. Besides their help with the cows and the operation of the farm, the "revolving door" according to Sue, of Jane's kitchen opens up to reveal a variety and abundance of baked goods. "She always has something for everyone," Sue said.

Reading fair board members Feryl and Jane, in fact, had received the Outstanding Farm Family Distinction in 1975. Since the award was introduced in 1956, there have been several instances of the second generation receiving the award.

## A Longtime Dairy

Keith and Sue, who are renting the land and building, are purchasing the farm from Keith's parents.

The farm has been a dairy operation since Keith's parents began farming with 10 cows. In 1968, the Treichlers expanded from 20 to 60 cows. In 1999, remodeling took place, adding new stalls, curtains, and general upgrades. Another silo was built two years ago.

After taking business courses in high school, Keith worked for his uncle building new homes for three years after graduation. He

later worked part-time for his father on the farm and drove tractor trailer part-time. He later began work full time at the farm with his father, an operation which he took over four years ago.

Sue, a self-described "town girl" who grew up in Lyon Station, Berks County, met Keith through the Virginville Grange. Attracted to the organization's youth events and activities, she joined at age 14 and later "married into the farm" by marrying Keith.

Conservative spending is one key to a smoothly running operation, according to Keith.

"We don't like to be in a whole lot of debt. Make your equipment last. Take care of everything so you don't have to buy new. Pay attention to the little things so you don't get big bills. Don't abuse your equipment. Weld it before something breaks next to it."

"Oil and grease everything," said Sue.

Another farm management tool is the family council meetings that provide a forum to discuss decisions about the farm. Since the children help with making money, they should have a voice in decisions concerning management, say the Treichlers.

"We make the final decisions but they get their say," said Keith.

"That includes calling Brandon in Vermont," Sue said.

Brandon, 21, a senior at Penn State, has been a member of the Virginville Grange #1832 since age five. This summer he is working as an intern at ABS Global in Vermont.

By using the computer to help make mating selections, Brandon makes most of the breeding decisions, aside from his brother and sister's animals. In the past few years the Treichlers have put more emphasis on using high-quality bulls and that has become evident in the heifers, said Treichler.

Recently the Treichlers have begun to flush one of Brandon's cows, "Riverdale Brandon Pride," his first 4-H animal that has experienced success in the show ring and has proven to be a good producer. "Pride" was supreme champion over all breeds in Kutztown Fair's 1998 dairy show. Each of the Treichler children exhibit their animals in competition.

The tall-framed animal has



Sue and Keith Treichler and their family milk 55 cows, mostly Holsteins, but also Brown Swiss, such as "Cherish," pictured here, and Red and White Cattle on Fawnridge Farm.



The farm includes 35 acres of pasture for the cows.

won several bellringer awards and helped to bring the Brown Swiss breed into the once-exclusively Holstein herd.

Eight years ago Brandon bought Pride and another calf from a farm in Juniata County. Although he purchased the calves without his parent's knowledge, they have since learned to appreciate the breed, said Sue. "They have great attitudes," she said. "Most of them are just sweet and

"— nosy," finished Keith.

Brett, who has an interest in civil war history, has named his line of Brown Swiss after Southern states. The heifer calves have been named after southern cities and the bull calves after Civil War leaders.

The Treichlers have 15 Brown Swiss cows in the herd.

## Grange, Community Involvement

Keith has been a member of the Virginville Grange since age 5, and Sue since age 14. They have not only served as officers but also on state and national committees.

Keith, the first prince for the

Berks County Grange, was followed by Brett, who is a state Grange prince, the youngest to serve in that capacity.

In addition to all three children's involvement in 4-H — Brandon as a leader and Brett and Brittini as participants — Keith and Sue have served as Eastern Berks 4-H Dairy Club leaders for seven years. Sue has served as a dairy beef club leader for three years.

Each of the Treichler children are enjoying their own unique experiences in the dairy industry.

A member of the Penn State Dairy Science Club, Block & Bridle Club, and Dairy Judging Team, Brandon has also served as a teachers' assistant for the dairy animal physiology and reproduction class for three years.

He also does the actual breeding on the farm when he is available, a task he shares with his father.

Brett, a freshman at Fleetwood Middle School, is a member of the Virginville Junior Grange #436, which he has been active in since he was five years old. Brett is also a member of the Eastern

Berks 4-H Dairy Club, where he has served in several leadership positions, in addition to being a member of Berks County's Junior Regional Dairy Bowl team.

Brittini, a sixth grader at Fleetwood Middle School, is the Berks County Junior Grange Princess and has been the captain for the state junior Holstein Dairy Bowl Team.

Since her mother is busy doing the registrations and keeping vaccination, health, and financial records, besides helping in the barn, Brittini has shouldered some of the cooking and baking responsibilities.

The rolling herd average is 21,005 pounds of milk with 3.85 percent fat and 3.1 percent protein.

Expansion is limited by the availability of viable farmland in the vicinity, according to Keith. One option is to raise replacement heifers, which he may look into in the future, said Treichler.



The calf area is Brittini's favorite place to work, according to her mother, Sue. Since this Holstein calf has an island shape on its forehead, Brittini dubbed it "Aruba." The outdoor hutches, offering sunshine and fresh air, are an ideal, healthy place to raise the calves, said Keith. The family raises their own replacements.