

'Talker' Uses Her Talent To Promote Dairy Industry

LOU ANN GOOD
Food And Family
Features Editor

WATERFORD (Erie Co.) — Although she lives in the northwest corner of the state, Ashley Lynn Chapman travels hundreds of miles championing the use of dairy products.

As the Erie County and Pennsylvania alternate dairy princess, Ashley said that she has always been known as a "talker." Luckily for the dairy industry, Ashley is using that talent to spread the truth about milk, cows, and the dairy industry. Before being selected as state alternate dairy princess, Ashley had been a former county alternate and a dairy maid for two years.

"It's rewarding to share my wealth of dairy knowledge," Ashley said in her role as dairy princess. "Wearing a crown really opens doors of opportunities for me to speak. People pay more attention because I'm wearing a crown."

"The dairy industry puts food on my table just like yours," she tells them.

She is concerned that many people especially children do not know where food comes from. They think it comes from grocery stores.

"It never ceases to amaze me how little most people know

about cows," Ashley said. "So many kids think chocolate milk comes from brown cows."

She has another reason for basking in the role of dairy princess. "It's really neat representing the dairy industry because it's something my dad is really passionate about," she said.

Her dad Mike Chapman owns and operates a milk hauling company and lives on his parents' dairy farm on Chapman Road. On the same road, two uncles and a cousin also have dairy farms.

Although Ashley helps on the dairy farms of both her grandparents and of her uncles', she doesn't live on a farm. Her parents are divorced, and Ashley lives with her mother Lori Pennock.

Ashley has a brother Craig a year younger than she.

In addition to being known as the dairy princess, Ashley is also called, "the quote person."

"I write quotes that I hear and my friends send me in a book," Ashley said.

One of her favorite quotes is from Mary Kay Ash: "Aerodynamically the bumble bee shouldn't be able to fly. But the bumblebee doesn't know that. He goes on flying anyway and doesn't think about the impossible."

"Follow your heart," Ashley

tells others. She did. "Being dairy princess has opened so many doors for me."

One of those was serving as emcee during opening ceremonies at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, where she introduced the commodity queens in front of 10,000 people.

"That was the largest group that I ever spoke in front of," she said.

She has two horses and participates in the 4-H Horse Club, enjoys riding, barrel racing, and other games. So she especially was pleased to sit in the governor's box at the Farm Show to watch the rodeo.

"I've been riding horses since I was six or seven years old she said. My great grandfather gave me my first horse (which had been his) so it's really old but really special," she said.

As a senior at Fort LeBoeuf High School, Ashley misses a lot of classes to promote the dairy industry in other parts of the state. "My friends call me a part-time student," she said.

Nonetheless, Ashley is a member of the National Honor Society, a 4-year member of the volleyball team, and has served for years as a wrestling and track statistician. She is a class council member, a three-year member of Erie County's Relay for Life, 4-H ambassador, 4-H winter weekend counselor, a middle school mentor, and a participant in the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperatives Summer Institute.

Although she doesn't show animals, she attends the Waterford Community Fair every day it's open to help her brother Craig who is a year younger than she and shows dairy animals.

Ashley had planned to attend Penn State College of Communications after high school graduation. But her role as dairy princess has given her exposure to so many different facets of the ag community, and she is considering switching to Penn State's College of Agriculture.

"It's such an honor to work with so many great girls (other county dairy princesses). "Every single girl is so nice, and on another day could easily have won (a state position)," she said.

"Life has been good to me," she said.

Here is one of her favorite recipes using lots of dairy products.

- Chicken Fettuccini Alfredo**
- 6 boneless chicken breasts, cubed
 - 6 tablespoons butter, divided
 - 4 cloves garlic, minced, divided
 - 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
 - 1 pound fettuccini pasta
 - 1 onion, diced
 - 2 tablespoons garlic
 - 8-ounce package sliced mushrooms



Pennsylvania State Alternate Ashley Chapman loves to talk, and said that her role enables her many opportunities to share her wealth of knowledge about the dairy industry with those from non-farm backgrounds.

- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 3 cups milk
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 8 ounces shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
- 3 roma plum tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 cup sour cream

In a large skillet over medium heat, combine chicken, 2 tablespoons butter, garlic, and Italian seasoning. Cook until chicken is no longer pink inside. Remove

from skillet and set aside. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook 8-10 minutes or until al dente; drain.

Meanwhile, melt 4 tablespoons butter in the skillet. Saute onion, 2 tablespoons garlic, and mushrooms until onions are transparent. Stir in flour, salt and pepper; cook 2 minutes. Slowly add milk and half-and-half, stirring until smooth and creamy. Stir in cheeses; stir until cheese is melted. Stir in chicken mixture, tomatoes, and sour cream. Serve over cooked fettuccini. Serves 8.



"It's really neat representing the dairy industry because it's something my dad is really passionate about," said Ashley Chapman, who is both Erie County and State Alternate Dairy Princess. She stands with her dad in front of one of his milk hauling trucks.



Ashley helps out with cows and calves at her grandparents' and at her uncles' farms.



At the state pageant, Ashley poses with her dad Mike Chapman, mom Lori Pennock, and brother Craig.



With so many different relatives living along the same road, the younger generation often gathers at Ashley's grandparents' home.

