

State Alternate Dairy Princess Thrives On 'Busyness,' Humor

LOU ANN GOOD
Food And Family
Features Editor

BLAIRSVILLE (Westmoreland Co.) — "I thrive on busyness," said 17-year-old Rachel Ebert.

Almost in the same breath, she adds, "I'm the oldest and have three brothers."

Their mischievous antics kept her scrambling when they were younger, but her brothers are now targeting their energy toward "picking up the slack."

This became necessary when Rachel was crowned Pennsylvania's alternate dairy princess last September. She embarked on a whirlwind tour of dairy promotion that requires her to crisscross the state many times to represent the dairy industry.

Her brothers, Josh, 14; Jonathan, 10; and Jacob, 8, enjoy

being in the barns, and despite her exciting "new" life, Rachel said that she misses the barn work. Her parents Richard and Diane Ebert own the 395-acre Wil-Mar-Re Farm in partnership with Rachel's Uncle William and Aunt Martha. They raise 140 Holsteins with a 75-head milking herd.

Recently, they built a solar greenhouse barn for the calves. The sides raise up and down, and the bottom is sand covered. Rachel said the calves are much healthier because of the good air flow. Corn, soybeans, and alfalfa are raised on the acreage.

"I was never out of the area (Westmoreland) before. This is a completely different life for me, but I'm really enjoying it," she said.

Poised, articulate, and confident, Rachel recalls that her

image is quite different than the one presented during the first milk toast she made during the All-American Dairy Show.

"I stuttered. I couldn't remember names," she said.

Despite her humility, Rachel impressed the audience during competition at the state pageant with her comical skit based on the popular television program "Blue's Clues." She received first place for the skit, and her answer to impromptu questioning showed that she indeed could perform under stress.

Her sense of humor played a role in capturing the audience and the judges' attention.

"I get my sense of humor from my dad," Rachel said.

That sense of humor injects a comfortable aura when traveling with Pennsylvania Dairy Princess Raechel Kilgore and Second Alternate Ashley Chapman.

"We share a lot of little inside jokes with each other," Rachel said.

Rachel's knowledge of the dairy industry was enhanced by serving as county dairy maid for three years. She's grateful for the assistance of one dairy maid in helping her with county promotions.

"I love being around people and talking — I'm always willing to answer questions," Rachel said.

"I've learned to appreciate not only people who work in the dairy industry but also many who are connected with it. It's given me a bigger picture of the dairy industry in the county, state, nation, and in the world."

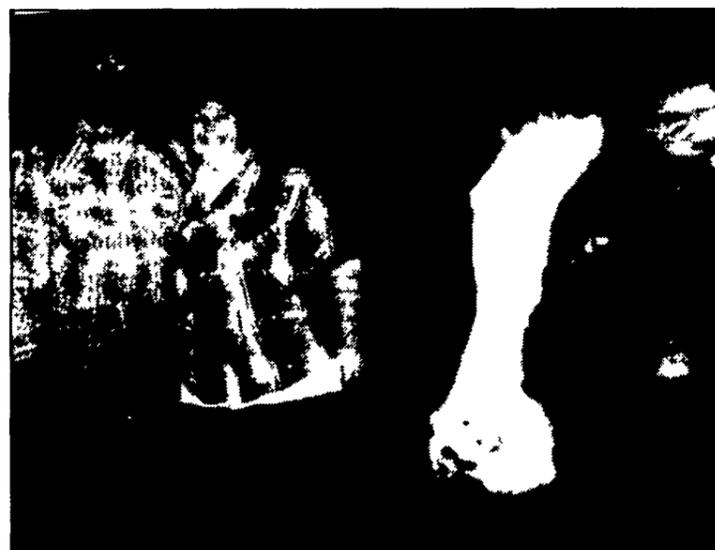
At Derry Area High School, Rachel has been active in the varsity swim team, class play, the school musical, and filling an internship writing grants for high school classes.

In church, Rachel is active as a member of the youth group, Campaign for Human Development committee member, youth council for the Diocese of Greensburg, a lector, and altar server.

She also is active in the Sugarloaf 4-H Club. She owns nine dairy animals that she enters in



Calves are Rachel's forte on the family farm. She owns nine dairy animals.



"My sense of humor comes from my dad (Richard Ebert)," Rachel said.



Working in the barn isn't just feeding calves for this alternate dairy princess. Here she carries a bag of silage to the growing calves.



Celebrating Rachel Ebert's coronation as First State Alternate Dairy Princess are her parents Richard and Diane Ebert and brothers, Josh, 14; Jonathan, 10; and Jacob, 8.

competition at the Westmoreland Fair. Rachel has also served as a gardening volunteer at Keystone State Park and at a summer camp for kids.

Although it's sometimes a bit hectic to fulfill high school studies, Rachel is philosophical about the trade-off. She said, "I'm learning so much more — school will always be there."

After high school graduation, Rachel plans to pursue ag science and ag communications at Penn State.

"The hardest thing about being a dairy princess is learning to balance home and promotional responsibilities."

She's grateful for her brothers' willingness to assume her farm chores while she travels.

"Another great thing about

being the only girl with three brothers is that I never had to share a room," she said.

Here is one of the Ebert family's favorite recipes.

CHEESE POTATOES

- 1 bag hash browns
 - 16-ounces sour cream
 - ½ cup butter
 - ½ cup milk
 - 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
 - 1 can cream of chicken soup
- Place hash browns in 9x13-inch pan. In separate bowl, mix remaining ingredients. Spread mixture on hash browns, cover and bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Serves 8-10.

Milks Make Healthy Diets

• New research suggests that flavored milks may be an ideal weapon to help battle the widespread calcium deficiencies among children and teens. Researchers at the University of Vermont studied the beverage patterns of nearly 4,000 children and adolescents in this country. They found that those who drank flavored milk had a higher total milk intake and a lower soft drink and juice drink intake compared to the children who did not consume flavored milk. Drinking flavored milk helped increase their calcium consumption, but it did not increase overall added sugar or fat.

• Researchers conclude that flavored milk can play a role in changing recent trends in children and teens' sugar-sweetened

beverage intake and offer a nutritious alternative. Like unflavored milks, all versions of flavored milks provide about 300 milligrams of calcium per serving, or about one-fourth to one-third of the daily calcium recommendation.

• About nine out of 10 teenage girls and seven out of 10 teenage boys do not get the calcium they need — potentially setting the stage for the bone-crippling disease osteoporosis, which currently affects nearly 28 million Americans. Children and teens ages 9 to 18 need 1,300 milligrams of calcium, or about four 8-ounce glasses of milk a day, while children ages 4 to 8 need 800 milligrams, which is the equivalent of about three 8-ounce glasses of milk each day.

Create Chocolate Milk Specialties

In a microwave or small saucepan, heat 1 cup chocolate fat free skim or 1 percent lowfat milk until hot. Stir in one of the following:

- 1 teaspoon instant coffee crystals
- 2 or 3 peppermint or butterscotch hard candies, crushed
- 1 or 2 small chocolate-covered peppermint patties, broken up
- 1 tablespoon caramel or butterscotch ice cream topping
- Several shakes of ground cinnamon
- Several drops of peppermint, coconut, almond or vanilla extract

Or, start with one cup of milk, either hot or cold, and take your pick of fruit or dessert-flavored additions.

- A splash of vanilla, almond, or maple extract
- 1 tablespoon of fat-free fudge ice cream topping plus ¼ cup sparkling mineral water or club soda
- ½ cup fresh or frozen strawberries, pureed
- 2 tablespoons orange juice concentrate and ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons instant malted milk powder and 1 teaspoon chocolate syrup
- ½ cup root beer and a small scoop of vanilla lowfat ice cream
- Pureed banana with ½ teaspoon honey and ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon chocolate syrup and a dash of cinnamon

