

# Family Tradition Spans 40 Years At All-American

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — The Shank family tradition of showing purebred Ayrshires began more than four generations ago when William Shank of Hagerstown, Md. began showing in the mid 1950s. Initially, the farm was called Rocky Spring Farm, and its showstring of purebred Ayrshires traveled to Harrisburg to the first All-American Dairy Show in 1964.

The Shank Family would quickly prove their animals were strong competitors by winning the junior yearling class at the 1965 show with a homebred animal, Rocky Spring Royal Jonquilla. From this early show onward, the Ayrshires of the Shank Family would be very prominent at All-American dairy shows.

Continuing in his father's footsteps by showing and breeding remarkable Ayrshires, William's son, Ralph Shank, and his bride, Patricia, purchased an additional farm in Hagerstown and changed the Shank farm name to Palmyra Farm. The change of the farm name was due to the tradition that, during and shortly after the Civil War, farms in this area were titled by the owners on the deed of the property.

This piece of property purchased by Ralph and Patricia was known as Palmyra. With this new farm name for the herd, three additional generations of the Shank family would exhibit Ayrshires. Ralph and Patricia en-

couraged their two children, Ralph Shank Jr. and Mary Shank Creek, to become active breeders of purebred Ayrshires and show them in FFA and the Maryland 4-H program.

The Palmyra showstring has not missed a single All-American Dairy Show since its inception in 1964, nor has it missed a trip to the Maryland State Fair since the early 1940s. During their 4-H and FFA years, Mary and Ralph Jr. showed their project animals at the All-American Dairy Show and were also members of the dairy cattle judging teams representing Maryland at judging competitions.

Ralph was a member of the Maryland 4-H judging team, along with renowned dairy judge Dennis Patrick, from the nearby Ayrshire farm, Maple Dell. Mary was a member of the 1980 Virginia Tech judging team and won the overall individual reasons award in her senior year. Her team also placed second in the overall contest. Ralph Jr. and Mary showed at the All-American Dairy Show as junior Ayrshire members, and Mary has judged state and national shows at the All-American Dairy Show since her graduation.

Mary Shank married Michael Creek, and all four of their children have judged and shown Ayrshires through 4-H, FFA, and junior Ayrshire programs. Their children, Michael, Mark, Evan,

and Jordan, are familiar faces in the show ring and are definitely a strong part of the successful Palmyra Ayrshire tradition.

In 1999, the Creeks' twin sons, Mike and Mark, represented Maryland at the Invitational Youth Dairy Judging Contest at its All-American, and the team placed first in the 4-H division. Mike also received the overall first-place individual award. Erin and Ryan, children of Ralph Jr and wife, Terri, have also participated in the judging and showing competitions held during All-American show week.

For many reasons, Oak Ridge Brvis Bonnie, EX 94 is one of the families favorite Ayrshires. Bonnie certainly knows her way to the champion circle at the Eastern National Ayrshire Show, conducted during the All-American Dairy Show. She has been named grand champion three times — 1978, 1980, and 1982, and was named reserve grand champion in 1976. Bonnie has turned out to be quite a brood cow with many daughters and granddaughters selected as bull mothers. She has three daughters on the "One Elite Cow List" of the National Ayrshire Association, and many offspring that have been very successful in the show ring. The most recent honor belongs to her great granddaughter, Palmyra Reno Bethany-ET, shown by Jordan Creek, who was selected as the first place junior 2-year-old cow.

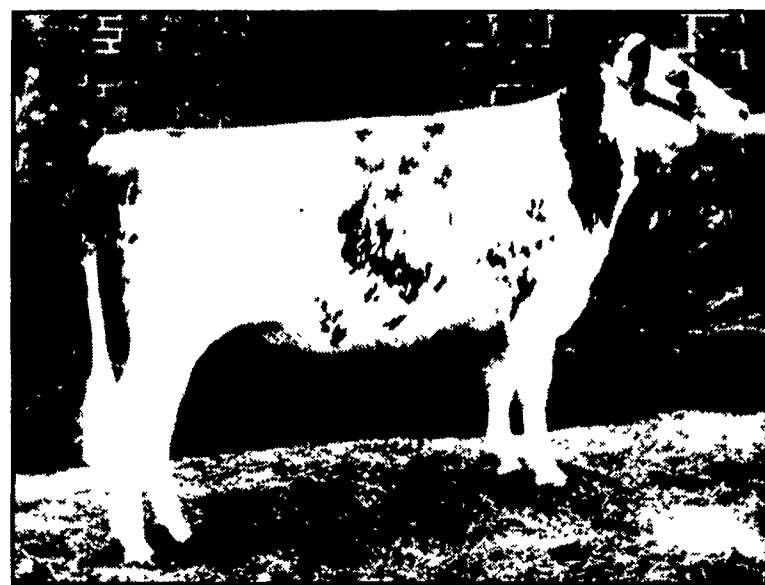
In addition to Bonnie's success and numerous class placings, the showstring of the Shank-Creek families have been awarded the following championships and premier breeder and premier exhibitor banners: 1977 grand champion with Palmyra Dolmen Tammy EX-91, 1979 and 1980 reserve grand champion with Tammy, 1993 grand champion with Covey Farms CVH Rosetta, premier breeder in 1977, 1982, and 1983, and premier Exhibitor in 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, and 1990.

One of the most memorable trips to the All-American Dairy Show was in 1980 when Palmyra Farms won grand champion with Oak Ridge Brvis Bonnie and reserve grand champion with Palmyra Dolmen Tammy. When asked how that felt, Mary Shank Creek smiled and responded, "Well, it was a good day."

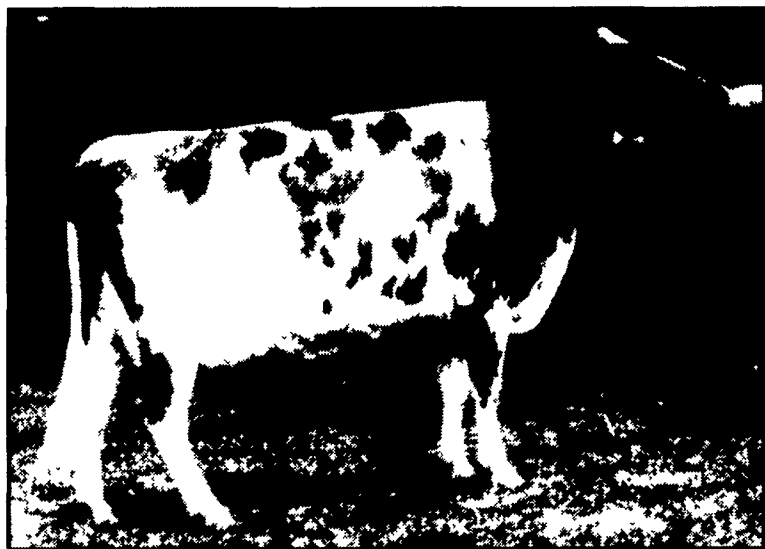
Ralph Jr. And Mary both agree that they enjoy the quality of the Ayrshire show at the All-American Dairy Show and felt that the competition has been strong since its inception. Mary remarked, "The premiums have always been generous to the exhibitors but recently have been quite helpful when keeping a full showstring on the road." She also believes the facilities are exhibitor friendly and they appreciate a



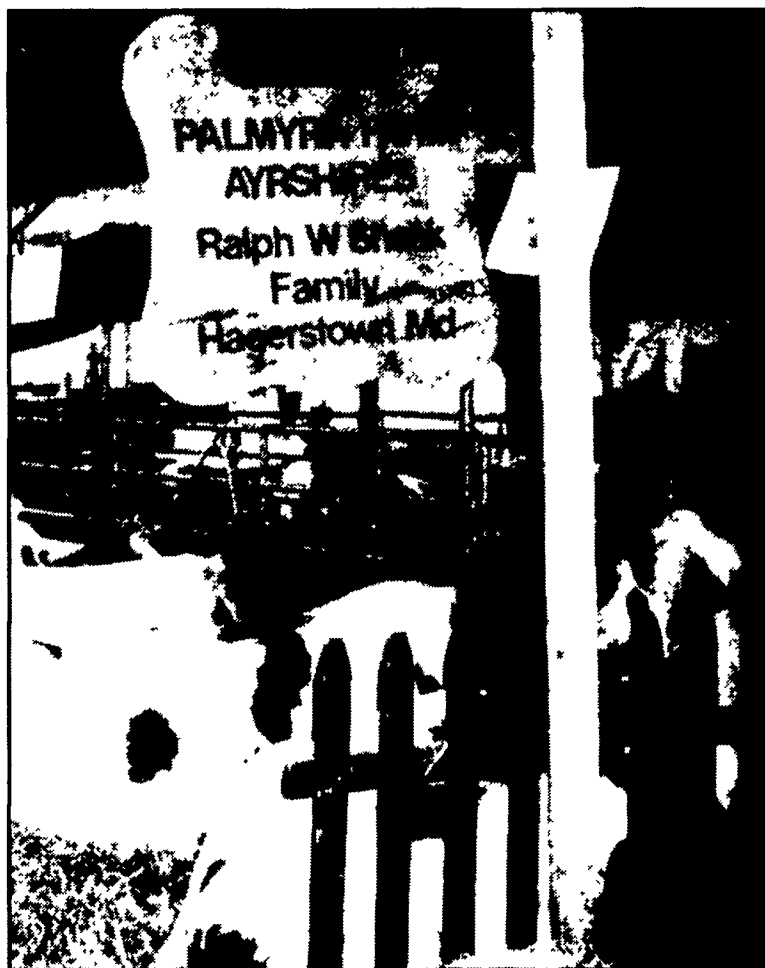
The family of Palmyra Ayrshires. From left, the Creek family, Mark, Mike, Mary, Evan, and in front, Jordan, (great granddaughter from Oak Ridge Brvis Bonnis) Palmyra Reno Bethany-ET, and the Shank Family — Ryan, Terri, and in front, Erin.



Rocky Springs Royal Jonquilla, the original first-place junior yearling winner for Palmyra Ayrshires at the All-American Dairy Show in 1965.



Oak Ridge Brvis Bonnie



A very familiar farm sign invites everyone to visit with Palmyra Ayrshires of Hagerstown, Md. at the All-American Dairy Show.

quality national show so close to their farm.

When asked if any other trips to Harrisburg that stand out, Mary sighed and said that the flood, which occurred in 1975, will never be forgotten. She said trailers just pulled up one after another and loaded many farms' animals and took off as soon as possible.

Then another trailer would come and get the next load. It was common for many exhibitors to have their showstring on numerous trailers. She was just relieved to have all their animals transported safely and get home. She will never forget the overwhelming hospitality offered and arrangements the All-American Dairy Show personnel gave to the exhibitors during the dangerous moments of the high flooding. The concern for the safety of all exhibitors and their cattle was well appreciated by everyone involved. She and her brother, Ralph, laugh about the conditions now, but they said they were unsure of where the

flooding was worse, in Harrisburg or at home in Hagerstown, where the nearby Antietam Creek flooded their farm and the cattle trailer almost did not make it to the barns.

Four generations, with more than a dozen members, of the Shank-Creek Family have been more than just participants at the All-American Dairy Show. It is exhibitors like this family that make the All-American Dairy Show the best national show for youth, adults, and quality cattle. It is a top quality dairy show where exhibitors from all over the U.S. and Canada bring their cattle to compete with other elite dairy animals.

The Palmyra Ayrshire Family will be one of the six farm families to be honored at the 40th Anniversary celebration of the All-American Dairy Show Sept. 21-25 at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg. For more information, contact the All-American Dairy Show office (717) 787-2905 or e-mail aad@pa.state.us.

## Penn State Beef Sale Set For Nov. 7

**UNIVERSITY PARK** (Centre Co.) — Renewing a time-honored tradition, Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences this fall will hold a beef cattle sale.

The first sale at Penn State since 1990, the event will be an educational experience for students, a fund-raiser and an opportunity to share Penn State genetics with other beef producers.

Angus breeders from across the East are expected to attend the "Penn State Proud! Beef Cattle Sale," which is open to the public. Starting at noon on Nov. 7 at the Beef-Sheep Center off Orchard Road, approximately 50 cows will be sold, according to beef unit manager Don Nichols.

Many of the cows will have calves at their side and heifers will have been bred to top A.I. sires. Very few bulls will be sold.

Although the sale is expected to generate more than \$100,000, Nichols believes the biggest benefit is to students.

"We are developing students who will be qualified to merchandise cattle," he says. "They will learn marketing techniques and the subtle things we do to prepare animals for sale. This will teach them something that they can take home. They'll meet people in the business and hopefully make merchandising contacts that might help them later."

Nichols hopes this year's sale will be the first of many, held at regular intervals at Penn State.

"Sales help us to control our cattle inventory, and they allow us to offer our genetics to other Angus breeders throughout the country," he says.

"With the number of cattle we have and the long-range plan, we should get back to having sales every two or three years. It is something that we have to build on. Sales attract students and help the breeders."

For more information about the beef sale, call (814) 863-0831 or visit <http://das.psu.edu/beefsale/> on the Web.