Kids Korner

Susquehanna Princess Welcomes June Baby

Friday the 13th was not an unlucky day for Bill and Abbey Jones. This was the day their fifth baby was born, a beautiful little girl Krista Vicky Jones. Susquehanna County Dairy Princess Shana Mack visited the Jones' to recognize a "June is Dairy Month" baby. Shana took them their evening meal and a 'got milk' outfit and bottle for the baby, along with cow erasers and coloring books for her brother and sisters. Krista's brother and sisters are Luke, 8; Mackenzie, 6; Keri, 5; and Peyton, 2.

Beefman Begins Tour At Beef Expo

WESTMORELAND, N.Y. — Beefman, the official mascot of the New York Beef Industry Council (NYBIC) recently visited the Main Beef Expo.

This summer Beefman will visit four states to help spread the good word about beef. Beefman has been maintaining a travel journal to document his visits.

He wrote the following words:

Dear New York Beef Producers,

I had a terrific time in Maine! Those girls I met really like me. A lot of 'em aren't from Maine. They're from the Technical College in Massachusetts and they want to visit them there next winter. How exciting!

Anyway, I never saw so much rain. Why it rained and rained. But I stayed inside because all the people were inside mulling around the cattle and talking, so why should I be out getting wet? My hat's so big it kept me pretty dry except that it seemed to catch the rain falling off the barn roof.

Lots of folks wanted their picture taken with me. I really muscled up for them. I was really handsome. They don't see many cowpokes like me up north, I guess.

That lady from the Maine Beef Council is pretty nice too. She made sure nobody punched me. There were a couple of little guys who challenged me to box with them, but I coyly acted surprised. The little devils!

Hey, guess what! I went to my first cattle auction. Wow, that guy up front talks real fast. He was rattling away and people kept waving at him, so I guess he was doing a good job. Then there were these other guys outside the ring. They were pointing at people and yelling something like "Ya-ep! Ya-ep!" — Does anyone know what that means?

I had fun visiting the Maine-New England Beef Expo. It's a great event. But, I was glad to come home. Traveling makes a cowboy tired.

Sincerely,
Beefman

P.S. If the youngin's want to visit me, they should visit my page on the New York Beef Council Website at www.nybeef.org.

Small Seeds Appear In Seedless Watermelon

COLUMBUS, Ohio — You can rest assured that your sighting of seeds in a seedless watermelon is normal. Although you are seeing little white dots, this case is not enough to label you fruity!

The little white seeds most consumers find when splitting open a watermelon are empty skins from young seeds and are soft and edible. Seedless watermelons are usually less messy to eat than seeded watermelons.

The small, white seeds are the work of scientists who have developed a way to raise a "mule" watermelon — fruit that cannot reproduce. The plants of seedless watermelon are pollinated and produce fruit, but the seeds inside the watermelon are infertile.

Because the seeds are infertile, the melon adapts. The inner, red fruit is often firmer than a seeded watermelon because it does not soften to cushion developing seeds. This usually results in a little longer shelf life.

The seedless watermelon's seeds have three chromosomes, instead of the normal two chromosomes. When the chromosomes in the seeds begin to split and multiply, the extra chromosome throws the process off, leaving the seeds infertile. So, while it looks like a seed, it would not grow if planted.

Scientists achieved the seedless melon this way: The seeds planted for seedless watermelon are modified by the chemical colchicine to have four chromosomes. These seeds are then pollinated by a normal seed with two chromosomes. The resulting fruit has seeds that receive two chromosomes from one parent and one chromosome from another, hence three chromosomes and infertility.

The four-chromosome seeds for seedless watermelon sometimes cost 20 times the price of regular watermelon seed. They also have low germination rates, which is one of the biggest problems for growers. But with the right temperatures and growing conditions, seedless watermelon can be grown.