

Value of farm kids stump experts?

Huge forests have been felled to provide the paper to document the findings of experts who have studied everything a farmer ever produced, bought or borrowed.

The studies and commissions never uncovered anything that wasn't common knowledge. The one thing that was missed, though, was how the size of the farmer's family contributed to his success or failure.

Anyone who has what he considers the ideal family wouldn't take a million dollars for one of his kids, and wouldn't give you a plug nickel for another one. The ideal size? Well that, thank goodness, is still at the discretion of the parents.

The arrival of the first offspring is always celebrated with extra fervor. When the little bundle has cried for the fifth night in a row while Dad-

dy is trying to get the crop in, he wonders why they were in such a hurry to begin a family. When that same bundle gets over teething, flashes that smile that slays even the most standoffish person, you wonder why you waited so long to become a parent.

Teaching a toddling son or daughter about the environment he lives in is a greater ego builder for the parents than getting the local prize for best dairy herd, prize hog or top selling bull in the sale. Watching them thrive despite the peck of dirt they seem to be covered with and occasionally ingest beats trying to outmanoeuvre the weather and the markets.

When they become old enough to really be a help, when you need them the most, they'll be at 4-H, or playing sports. The mother will be gone too, driving them

wherever the event is held.

Stone picking time makes you wish you had a dozen kids, and when it's time to get braces on their teeth, one is more than enough.

Boys not girls are desired when there's a tractor that needs fixing but girls are desired when getting the car insurance premium for sons.

The car insurance problem is a drop in the bucket when the girls start getting married. Buying the sons a farm to start them off isn't cheap either. My advice is to provide ladders to the daughters' beaus, and urge the sons to work in the "real world", until they have some experience under their belt.

Compatibility has been tried to the limit when a family of five daughters with one bathroom reach adulthood with no permanent scars. Parents of five sons usually

entertain themselves at home on Friday night, unless they want to go to town on the bicycles that are left in the shed. Nothing else with wheels is left.

Once the rooms echo your own thoughts, and there isn't a toy or running shoe in sight, you realize it's all finished. The ideal family has been nurtured and gone. But not for long. The nice thing about raising a crop of kids is that they are self-perpetuating. In no time at all, there's another couple who has decided to begin a family, and being a grandparent gives you all the pleasure, with little work or expense.

It's just miraculous though, that some expert hasn't delved into the farm family and come up with what size family, what gender of children, and what talents it must possess to enhance the farm family's success or failure.



Karen Davey

1987

Athlete of the Week

"Athletics makes school worthwhile!" says 18-year-old Karen Davey, a grade 13 student at the Chesley District High School.

"I really like it," she says "It's an enjoyable outlet. We have a top-notch program here at CDHS that continues to improve."

Karen, daughter of William and Ruth Davey of RR 2 Chesley, is indeed active in all kinds of sports.

She has just finished a season playing guard on the school's basketball team; she plays volleyball; is a member of the cross-country team; plays soccer, badminton and is "a thrower" on the track and field team, participating in discus, javelin and shot put events.

And when she's not doing all that, she is either playing ringette in Tara or hockey on a non-competitive ladies' team in Southampton.

Last year, she was runner-up for the overall girls' track and field championship, an honour she won in grade nine.

Next year, Karen says, it's off to either McMaster or Western University to study physical education. She hopes to pursue a physical education teaching career.

of Bruce Presbytery, Brenda Mason was introduced as the staff person for the Queen's Bush Rural Ministries. She made a very good impression on the court, and was met with en-

Bush Rural Ministry

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active reality.

Brenda Mason of Belgrave, Ontario, lives on a farm with her family. She is active in the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and is experienced in farm management and grief counselling. She has per-

midst of an emotional trauma, it is difficult for people to believe that they are not completely alone. Queen's Bush Rural Ministry will be a Christian mission, there so that people will not be alone. It will provide an alternative to Government advisory boards, and will connect people to others who share their problem, and just be there so there is someone the farmer can talk to.

Farming is a way of life, but a way of life that is threatened. There is an increase in the stress felt by

farmers, and in problems both financial and within the family. Queen's Bush is a beginning in trying to solve some of those problems. It is hoped that with Queen's Bush Rural Ministry, no one will need to be alone.

The ministry is presently supported by grants from Bruce Presbytery and Hamilton Conference, as well as by donations from local churches and groups. It is hoped that in the near future that The Queen's Bush Rural Ministry will be an ecumenical ministry.



Debbie M. Calhoun graduated from Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology, Guelph, on November 21, 1987, with a diploma in nursing.

Debbie is a former graduate of Chesley District High School and the only daughter of Ron and Marlene Calhoun of RR2, Chesley. Debbie has accepted a position at the Hanover and District Hospital.