

4-H member earns acclaim at Royal Winter Fair

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Sheri McCleary walked away with national honours at the Royal Winter Fair. With Murrayville Belle, the purebred Simmental calf produced on her parents' farm in Roseneath, the 19-year-old won the national Reserve Grand Champion title, besting over 100 competitors from across Canada.

"She had quite a weekend," laughs Sheri's dad Murray. "She was up at 4 a.m. the Thursday before to get to Toronto and then she was up at 4:30 a.m. the Friday, Saturday and Sunday for her class competitions. On Sunday, she had to get back to London for university classes Monday."

Sheri is a first-year of Human Resources and Nutrition studies student at the University of Western Ontario.

From the age of 11, the Roseneath native has belonged to 4-H, working to improve her showmanship skills and learning how maximize livestock potential. Her eight years of 4-H membership culminated in her national award as her parents Murray and Judy watched from the show ring sidelines.

"Oh yes, we met her there," says Judy. "It was her first showing at the Royal. She did so well. It's quite something, really."

The young 4-H members who represented Northumberland County at the Royal Winter Fair, back in November, deserve credit and public acknowledgement, say Northumberland Cattlemen's Association directors.

"They work really hard at it and this past year, they really did well, earning some national prizes," says association secretary Sue Jouvstra. "These are really good young people, the ones you don't often hear a lot about."

Another Roseneath area 4-H member, Crystal Clark, placed in the top seven nationally for showmanship.



Sheri McCleary, 19, Roseneath, won national Reserve Grand Champion at the Royal Winter Fair with her Simmental calf Murrayville Belle. It was Sheri's first showing at the Royal.

in Northumberland County in the 4-H beef program, a lot less than represents the potential of producers. But, it's quite a compromise for cattle producers to allow a calf outside for the summer, their busiest time of the year."

All summer long, the 4-H members, ranging in ages 10 to 20, work with their selected calf, working on the feeding, care and development for showmanship.

"It takes patience and determination," notes Mr. Ferguson.

"The animal has to know the handler, be familiar with the stick and be able to stand and show well."

He and his wife enjoy their involvement with the young people.

"Just making it to the Royal is something. They have to place well in local fairs to qualify. When they enter the ring at the Royal, we're guessing every move

"The older ones tend to mentor the younger ones," he observes.

And he credits the young people with their willingness to compete and take rejection.

"Even if they don't stay on the farm, they learn a lot," he says. "They learn about determination, about team work and the animal handling and work involved, too."

The finesse shows whenever he asks one of the 4-Hers, as they are known, to address a public group.

"They never refuse," he says with admiration. "They get up in front of 200 people and speak."

A Northumberland 4-H member will be a featured

guest at the annual meeting and dinner of the Northumberland Cattlemen's Association in Roseneath this Thursday.

of the judges right along with them. We're just as excited as the kids are. When they are pulled out for top placings, that really is something."

The 4-H group works as a team at the Royal, he notes, and that's worthwhile in itself.

Cattlemen's Association director Dan Ferguson of Warkworth agrees. He and his wife acted as chaperones for seven of Northumberland 4-H members who travelled to the Royal to compete. "There are about 35 kids