Buckrells of Ballinafad get record price for lamb

By GEORGE EVASHUK Herald staff writer

Unlike Mary of the nursery rhyme who had a little lamb that followed her everywhere the Buckrells of Ballinafad have 250 and one of them recently fetched a Canadian record price of \$1,000.

The lamb, a Dorset ram quadruplet, had an average daily gain of .84 pounds per day. It set the Canadian record price July 23 at the Fifth Ontario Station Tested Ram and Ewe sale in Erin when It was purchased by Mac-Mar Farms Ltd., Beaverton, Ontario's largest commercial sheep operation.

And ever since the ram was sold (for breeding), says Nancy Buckrell, the phone at their 100 acre farm hasn't stopped ringing with inquiries from all over Ontario, Quebec and some from New York asking if there are any more.

"We were quite thrilled," she said and the record price "was totally unexpected." The Buckrells only began

sheep farming two years ago when they moved to their present farm from a five acre "hobby farm" near Stewarttown where they had about four horses.

Called Loch Lane Sheep, the farm is still "in growing pains" Mrs. Buckrell said in an interview. And they just aren't ready to handle the amount of business the record sale has generated.

It started as a hobby farm with 20 ewes after they had moved to Ballinafad to have more room for their horses. Now it looks like the horse may have to go to make room for the sheep, Mrs. Buckrell told The Herald. They have 120 ewes and figure the flock will stop at 150.

Brian Buckrell is a veterinarian and he researched the breeds, Mrs. Buckrell said, to come up with a Dorset because they breed year around, and with Finlandias, which are prolific.

In addition to the two purebred flocks, they are also crossbreeding, hoping to produce a commercial ewe. Sheep farming is a "unique industry" where everyone is doing something different," Mrs. Buckrell

Loch Lane Sheep is a "family effort in which their three children-Lorne 8, Lorraine 7 and Graham 4, "the real farmer"-all pitch in with the chores, she said.



Not only is the grass greener on the other side of the fence, but also, as is the case above, in the centre of the feeder where a

Finn sheep got its head stuck. Nancy Buckrell helps the hapless sheep get unstuck.

And without Grandma and Grandpa (Dr. Buckrell's parents) we couldn't do it."

lot of hard work" and "demanding," she said. "We start at six and finish at ten at night as a rule."

Mrs. Buckrell believes that sheep farmin is an ideal way for people from the city to make a successful transition to farm life. Their own success in only two years has meant that many groups of farmers visit their farm on weekends to see and discuss their program.

The move to the country from the city-they formerly lived in Georgetown-also has Nevertheless, the farm is "a made the children more self sufficient," she sald.

"Our whole life has changed since we've come here," she said, seated in her large farm kitchen while Graham puttered around making Jello and trying to convince his mother to play chess. "We've become farmers."

But farming sheep is not without hazards and the worst, she said, "are the dogs. There's something with dogs and sheep," she added but in

their area, they have not had the problem. Last winter a timber wolf, "bold as brass" came to the farm twice to look over the sheep in the barns but was chased away.

The Buckrells have a Kelpie, an Australian sheep dog, but so far it is alraid of the sheep. Each of the children gets a

lamb on his or her birthday. The family have discovered that they have one thing in common with other sheep farmers, Mrs. Buckrell said, "If you really like sheep, you really like sheep."

CAS director

than stats say

By KAREN WARD Herald staff writer

Figures representing child abuse cases in Halton reports by the Children's Aid Society in a provincial memorandum are not accurate, Ron Coupland, executive director of Halton's Children's Aid Society said Friday.

In 1976, 11 cases were reported, six in 1975 and five cases in 1974, but these figures are low, he said, because persons are afraid to report child abuse cases. Doctors feel that if they report the case and CAS enters into the situation but loses the case, the doctors wonder what happens to the children.

A coroner's jury listed 80 recommendatios to be considered by government departments and social service agencies following a five week

It was found that Vicky Ellis, weeks before her death last March, died of natural causes. experiences. But the court cited improper feeding by her parents and possible errors in judgment by social workers as contributing factors. Vicky was the third

child abuse and sald a central in more accurate figures.

abuse teams is a sound deci- will have to be accounted for. sion and should consist of doctors who would be able to whether a person is sick and make medical recommenda- treatable whereas a social tions on any given circum- worker questions whether a

by experts to make it more efficient and accessible. This represents "a nightmare" for to deal with." Mr. Coupland.

CAS is not perfect and represents a weakness in the society", he said, "but the public has to realize social workers from social workers." are not hired for their ability to fill out a perfect report.

Social workers are hired for their ability to deal with human distress and a good writer."

The public is constantly complaining of the CAS expense and if the society had to hire expert writers to file reports, costs would sky rockets, he added.

An excellent recommendation Mr. Coupland agreed with is the CAS be given access to all material in files of hospitals, police, mental institutions and courts without the consent of the parent of guardian but subject to judicial control.

If parental permission is refused now, the CAS has to re-create a situation, which is almost impossible to do, he

Also he agreed wholeheartedly with the recommendation for unlimited scope for cross-examination of witnesses at family court hear-

Mr. Coupland said 25 years inquest into the death o of experience in clinical family month-old Vicky Ellis, in Tor- - work has shown him lawyers feel that when the ritual of court has finished, the case is who was put into her parent's complete. But, that he said, is care by the family court three where the CAS steps in and continues dealing with human

He agrees with the recommendation that only psychiatrists make psychiatric assessments of families or Individuals for purposes of family child of Deborah Ellis to die court custody hearings, if the under unusual circumstances. law would accept social work Mr. Coupland agrees with as a profession and accept a the jury's recommendations social worker's assessment of centered on tighter control of families or individuals as a separate assessment. He adregistry of cases would result ded that the expense and time involved to hire a psychlatrist He said the concept of child to do a separate assessment

A psychiatrist questions person is immature and can't The jury recommended the cope with the skills of dealing CAS filing system be reviewed with life's problems, he said. "The court can't make up its mind which decision it wants

"Social workers are being "The filing system of the placed in a role of social control," he said, "and an interesting phenomenon is developing of what society wants

Children in care of the CAS as of June 30, 1977, total 189. 157 of which were born in Halton. There are 95 children In foster homes, 19 in paid talker is not always a good institutions and four in psychlatric facilities.







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