



Mandi Ramsburg – 2004-2005 Youth Representative

Hello, remember me, Mandi Ramsburg, I was last year's alternate Youth Representative. I would love to try again to become the Maryland Dairy Goat Association Youth Representative. I had a blast being the alternate youth rep. I feel that the knowledge I gained while being the alternate has prepared me for the job as the Youth Representative. All the people I met in the association and at the various shows was a great experience. Everyone was willing to talk to me and ask about my goats.

My goats you ask, I have 18 dairy goats; Six Toggenburgs, Five Alpines, Three Oberhaslis, and Four Recorded Grades. They keep me quite busy each day taking care of them. Nine of my dairy goats were expecting kids this spring. So far, five have kidded, and out of five goats, I had ONE doe. I know that you cannot control the sex of the kids, but still I'm disappointed. I'll just keep my fingers crossed that the remaining four does will all have doe kids. I have had many new experiences this past year with my goats. The most memorable was last spring when I had to help my goat Malorie deliver her kid. One of the kids leg was bent back. My dad's hand was too big, so guess what I had to do it. That's right, I had to go in and fix the leg. I was scared and excited at the same time. It was a great feeling to be able to save the kid, of course it was a buck. This March my parents decided to go on vacation, leaving me at home with three expecting does. Wouldn't you figure, the very first day they were gone my Recorded Grade doe went into labor. Now, it's hard to talk to them when there on a plane to Hawaii. Therefore, I called the next best thing to my parents, Ms Cindy Rhoderick. She talked me through the birth of the twins, one I had to pull. Now you would think that would be enough excitement for one day, wrong! That evening, one of my toggenburgs gave birth. I had enough kidding for one day, but I managed with the help of my friends. Four days later the last doe gave birth, of course the next day my parents came home. I just hope next year they don't go away during kidding season. So, as you can see, I am a very responsible person, which is something a youth representative needs to be.

I attended several shows with my goats, and at each show, there were new surprises. Chance, the buck kid I saved, was Junior Champion in one of the rings at the MDGA Buck Show. Ellie Mae, my recorded grade milker, was Grand Champion in one of the rings at the MDGA Spring Show. My dry yearling Alpine was Junor Champion at the Washington County Ag Expo. I think the

biggest surprise was how well my Toggenburg milker, Spice turned out. She had an awesome udder and did well at the shows she attended. I also stayed for the open show at the MD State Fair. This was a great experience, and based on the number of goats there, I think my goats did very well. As part of my duties as alternate youth rep, I attended all the MDGA sponsored shows and helped hand out ribbons. This was my first year I attended the West Virginia show, but it was just to help. I had such a blast at that show, next year I'm taking my goats. I also want to attend the National Show in Harrisburg and participate in the youth activities. The past two years I have also attended the MDGA meetings. It's fun being able to see and talk with everyone during the fall and winter, while seeing what MDGA has planned for the year. You know, participation is another thing that makes a good youth representative.

Another great thing about being alternate youth rep was the fact that I got to work side by side with my good friend Malorie Rhoderick. Malorie has always been a great influence on me. In fact, my first goats came from the Rhoderick farm. She always gives me advice and even pushes me into doing things I didn't think I could do. Take for instance, the 4-H goat judging contest at the Maryland State Fair. I wasn't sure I was ready. Malorie and Mr. Ned Davis, twisted my arm to do it, so I tried it. Well it was a good thing they did, I placed second out of seven people. I think now I would like to be a goat judge when I get older. Malorie has taught me many, many things about goats and her teaching has inspired me to teach others.

Speaking of teaching others, I have made many people aware of the dairy goat. I gave a presentation to my fellow classmates about my experiences raising dairy goats. I talked about the six breeds of dairy goats. We all went outside and I taught them how to milk a goat, they all had a chance to try. They really enjoyed the kids that I showed them, but the real hit of the day was the goat milk fudge I made for them. There wasn't a piece left on the plate.

This year, I am leasing one of my goats to a friend and fellow 4-Her. I am having fun teaching my friend and her mother, all about dairy goats. I am going to work with her on fitting and showing the goat as well. I like being able to help others and teach them what I know. Willing to share experiences and knowledge with others is definitely something a youth rep should possess.

I competed in the County 4-H public speaking contest. My speech was entitled, "I am a Foster Mother".

I spoke of my experiences of being a mother to my goat kids, about the mischief kids can get into and the way it's like being a mother to human kids. I also did a demonstration called "Here Come the Kids". I taught other 4-Hers how to be prepared for when goat kids are born. Being able to speak in front of a group of people is one of the biggest qualities of a youth representative. I believe that I am definitely well qualified in this area; Ms. Cindy says I'm always talking.

Since each year I have to do a science fair project, I like to do them around goats. Last year my project was Goats Milk vs Cow Milk. I talked about the difference between the two and the nutritional value of the goats milk. My project earned me a honorable mention award at the science fair. This year's project was very interesting to do. I wanted to see if a home pregnancy test would work on a goat. I mean it would be great if it did. I wouldn't have to wait three weeks

to see if they were bred. Unfortunately, it didn't work. However, it made the cashier at the store ask questions when my mom brought the pregnancy tests. She congratulated my mom on having a baby. HA! HA!. Conducting the test was also interesting. I had to walk around behind the goat with a cup waiting for her to do her business. I think that grossed out some of the people at the science fair.

I really love being able to share my knowledge and experiences with other people. Working with goats has given me confidence in myself, taught me responsibility and above all helped me to communicate with others the importance of the dairy goat. For these reasons, and the ones I mentioned above, I feel that I am qualified to be the Maryland Dairy Goat Association Youth Representative.