

Fair began months ago for Soquel High 4-H'er

By CANDACE ATKINS
Soquel High student Wende Jack is "going for the top" in this year's livestock competition at the Santa Cruz County Fair.

She plans to see her lamb, Rocket proclaimed Grand Champion over all other 4-H and FFA competitors in the livestock show that begins today at 1 p.m. in Arena 1 at the fairgrounds.

"I'm going for the grand champion. That's all that's all that's on my mind," she said. "Last year, my lamb received a purple ribbon — I almost made it. This year, I'm going for the top."

Like other 4-H and FFA members, Miss Jack has spent the past several months preparing her lamb for the 1982 Fair. Every day, she spends a half hour feeding and cleaning up after her animal, and in the evening, there is a 15 minute exercise time.

On Sunday, Rocket was spruced so that he would look his best for yesterday's fair opening. Rocket received a thorough scrubbing, followed by a grooming session. He was not at all enthusiastic about the undertaking.

"It takes a lot of patience to wash a lamb — a lot. They aren't used to being washed, it isn't natural to them," she said. "I just put him on the carding table (which stands about six inches off the ground) in the driveway. He tried to jump off, sure. He didn't like it at all."

Rocket is a market lamb, which means he will be auctioned off on Saturday and slaughtered soon after that.

"When I was young, it used to bother me a lot. I was really attached to my animals. I learned to

you're shaking and your hands are on the lamb's neck, he will know. You just have to maintain — you have to maintain your brains. A lamb will try to get you down if you aren't careful. They try to tire you out. They're dumb, but not that dumb."

Rocket has practiced the routine he will be put through in the arena today during the livestock judging, and Miss Jack feels that will give him a winning edge over competitors who have not practiced.

"I've let him get used to our other sheep (at home), so that when he's in the arena, he will think it's just another pen of sheep," she said. "I also handle him like he will be examined in the ring so at the fair he will think, 'Oh, my legs are getting plopped around again.'"

Schnorf plans to exercise his sheep prior to the competition, especially Too Tall, who Schnorf describes as "spooky."

"I'll take him around — let him get used to the arena so he will calm down," said Schnorf.

Schnorf said that while he has raised several animals and exhibited in Santa Cruz and other county fairs, he still has plenty to learn.

"I still get nervous in the arena," he admitted, grinning. "I'm not really a veteran, I still have a few more years in FFA. You learn something every year that you compete."

Schnorf said his self confidence has increased, and he is far more relaxed with the care of his livestock since he joined FFA as a high school freshman.

"I used to pour the feed for my lamb and try to get him to eat," he said. "Now, I leave him alone. I find an animal does better when it isn't pushed. I was raised with animals and even with my first lamb, it was nice to have but it was no outstanding thrill — I'd been around them so long."

Both Miss Jack and Schnorf have plans to raise beef as a future project. While lambs cost around \$100, a steer will be several times that much to purchase, and cattle eat far more than lambs.

Schnorf said he plans to buy a steer this fall, possibly in October or November. He said there is more work to raising a steer, but added, "I don't see raising an animal, especially through FFA, a sacrifice of my own time. I enjoy having my animals."

Miss Jack refers to her future steer as "a dream," and asserts, "I'm planning on it. It's just a dream right now, but I know I will do it."

She agreed that beef cattle take more effort, but said they are "no more difficult than other animals as long as you have experience."

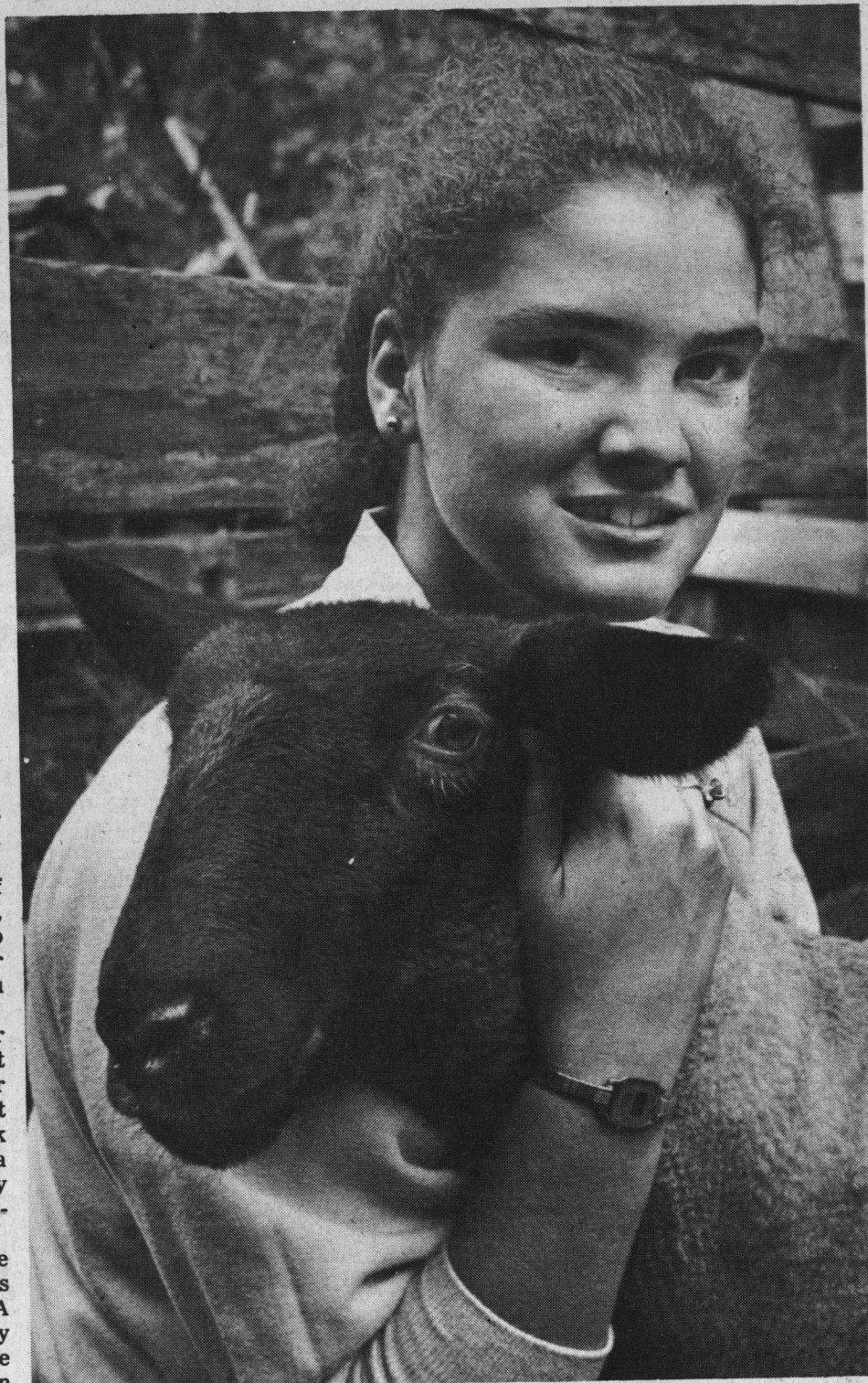
Neither Schnorf or Miss Jack plan to get rich off raising their livestock. A good profit from the fair's livestock auction for selling a sheep is \$75 — the hourly profit works out to pennies.

Both say they have received many benefits in their 4-H and FFA experiences that easily offset the low income they receive at auction time. Miss Jack says her social life has been

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4-H'er Wende Jack and Rocket

enhanced, and she is delighted to be 16 years old and still in 4-H.

"Most kids, when you mention 4-H to them they say, 'Yeah, right!' Junior high kids feel more of a stigma, but I never did. I say it right out, I'm in 4-H. It never bothered me," she said.

Schnorf, like Miss Jack, said he has met a lot of people he "would never have been able to know" if it weren't for his FFA affiliation.

"I don't see it as giving up anything," Schnorf concluded. "I do just what I want to do. I enjoy my animals."

"I get out there, I meet people through 4-H," said Miss Jack. "The only time I miss out on social events at school is when my sheep are lambing, but there is nothing I wouldn't give up for that experience."

Both Schnorf and Miss Jack will take part in the livestock judging today. Showmanship for both 4-H and FFA will begin at 9 a.m., and feeder and market sheep will be exhibited at 1 p.m. The events will be held in Arena 1 of the livestock area. On Saturday, beginning at 10 a.m., the livestock auction will be held in Arena 1.

was really attached to my animals. I learned to prepare myself, and now, it's just like saying good-bye to a friend," she explained. "You just have to get that through your brain. It still hurts a little. I'm sad right after the competition, but only for a few minutes. I tell myself, 'Look, there's still half the fair left and you can still see your lamb. Now, get out there and have a good time.'"

Mark Schnorf, who owned last year's grand champion lamb, agrees.

"I was 9 when I first started exhibiting, and I was really sad at the auction. But you get over that. Today, I really don't make pets out of my animals," he said.

Schnorf is a four-year member of FFA, and before that, he participated in 4-H for five years.

"When I started out, I was at the bottom of everything in the competition. A girl whose lamb won the grand champion award my first year told me, 'There's always next year, and the year after that. Keep trying.' I never gave up. It's sort of funny to begin at the very bottom and see yourself work up to the top," he said.

Schnorf will enter two market lambs, Too Tall and Ready Money (both were named last Thursday morning).

"I don't know about the grand champion award for this year," he said. "A lot depends on the judges, their preferences. I think my lambs will do pretty good, I'm not worried."

Miss Jack said part of competition involves "learning what the judges look for." Last year, she left too much wool on her sheep, she said, which cost her in the final competition.

"This year, I'm prepared for everything," she said. "There are two competitions, showmanship and market. I've entered Rocket in both. One thing I've learned is to keep calm. Lambs know by your touch if you're nervous — if