Victory takes the spotlight at Peru school show and tell

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At left, Dirigo Elementary School fifth-grader Lizzy Keene shows her calf, Victory, in a presentation with her classmates on Oct. 29 in Peru. (Bruce Farrin/Staff Writer)

PERU — Victory, a 10-month-old calf, was the star at a show-and-tell presentation recently at Dirigo Elementary School.

Lizzy Keene brought her 4-H project for fifth grade classmates to see and what it's like to raise an animal and showing it a fairs.

Students didn't know what to expect Oct. 29 when teacher Kristi Holmquist led them outside to meet Victory, who lives at Conant Acres farm in Canton.

Lizzy, who is a member of the Cumberland County All-Star 4-H Dairy club, is in her second year of showing cows.

Lizzy's mother, Sarah Keene, said her children work with their dairy cows at the farm.

"We have seven jerseys and too many Holsteins," Lizzy said.

Lizzy recently showed Victory at the Windsor Fair and won first place in her class for 4-Hers. She's also shown Victory at the Skowhegan Fair and Fryeburg Fair.

Victory is not Lizzy's the only show animal, though.



Dirigo Elementary School fifth-grader Lizzy Keene stands next to her mother, Sarah Keene, to show classmates her 10-month-old calf, Victory, at the school in Peru on Oct. 29. This is Lizzy's second year showing cows at fairs and competitions. (Bruce Farrin/Staff Writer)

"I have my cow, Frosty, but she is not going to any fairs right now," she said. "Berry, she's my winter yearling, and she's gone to all of them so far. And then Hot Shot, she's my spring calf, she's gone to all of them."

Staff and students had all kinds of questions about Victory.

"When you're at a fair, what does a typical day look like for you?" Principal Charlie Swan asked.

"Some mornings, I would get up, like 4 or 4:30, and then I would go into the barn, and it would be really cold. I would grab one of my heifers, bring her over to the wash rack, get her wet, take the soap and scrape all the poop off her and make her look nice and clean. Then I

would rinse her all out and bring her back to the barn, let her dry. Then I feed her."

What does she like most about showing cows, someone asked.

"Probably like taking my cows to a bunch of different fairs that I've never really been to, and trying to get more competition around other breeds of them that I show," Lizzy answered.

She's been to St. Louis, and to Orlando last year. This year she's going to Addison, Texas.



Dirigo Elementary School fifth-grader Lizzy Keene and her mother, Sarah Keene, answer questions from classmates about Lizzy's 10-month-old calf named Victory on Oct. 29 at the Peru school. Students asked if Victory moos and why there is a tag on her ear. (Bruce Farrin/Staff Writer)

One person asked how long cows live.

"That depends," Lizzy said. "Sometimes, they die at five years. There are others people whose cows die at 15."

Another asked how they know when a cow is pregnant.

Lizzy's mother said they have a blood test done in Pennsylvania.

And what's with the tag on the cow's ear, a classmate wanted to know.

“If she didn’t have one of these,” and two cows looked exactly the same, Lizzy explained, “I couldn’t tell them apart.”

Among other questions answered by Lizzy and her mother were that Lizzy milks cows and their highest producing one gives 11 or 12 gallons a day.

Does Victory moo?

Not normally, Lizzy said.

“Does she know her name?” asked another.

Lizzy called Victory’s name and her ears changed positions, indicating she does.

As the show-and-tell time ended, students lined up and took turns patting Victory before returning to class and the calf headed back to the farm.

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