

UPPER AUGUSTA TWP. —

Eleven-year-old Alexis Hamilton wanted to go to sheep camp so her mother Allison searched one line and found the closest one between Riverside and Sunbury. The North Carolina residents traveled to the Owens Farm for camp the week of July 11.

"She was so excited and begged to come to sheep camp,"

her mother said.

Alexis got to name her sheep but was undecided among Yeti, Clover or Gypsy. "Her sheep

likes to wander around," Allison said as she petted Tucker, one of the farm's dogs making the rounds in the barn among camp-

ers and family members for pats on the head.

"Working with the sheep and the other animals is really fun.

I love animals and they have a bunch of them," Alexis said.

Elena Gecan, 7, said she named her sheep Spot because it has a black spot on its back.

The Virginia resident was visiting cousins while also attending camp.

Donovan Harriot, 11, of New York City, first visited the farm

for lambing sleepovers in the spring and came back for sheep camp. "I enjoyed bathing my

sheep. We colored a bunch of wool in different colors that was very cool," said Donovan who

named his sheep Picky Pig after him and his dad. With him

at camp was his cousin Alex Newcomb, 9, of State College,

and Donovan's brother Kevin, 9, according to the boys' mother

Susan Harriot.

"We've been having a wonderful time. She (Caroline Owens) is

a great teacher. It has been educational, fun and action-packed,"

Susan Harriot said.

On July 13, Owens, who owns the farm with her husband David,

taught the 18 kids about sheep behavior in the wild including

climbing over natural obstacles and much more.

"They went to the barn to catch their sheep and put halters on

them and then led them to an obstacle course where they me-

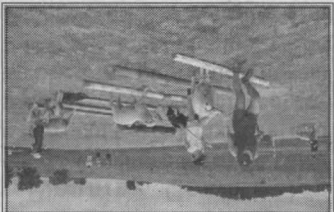
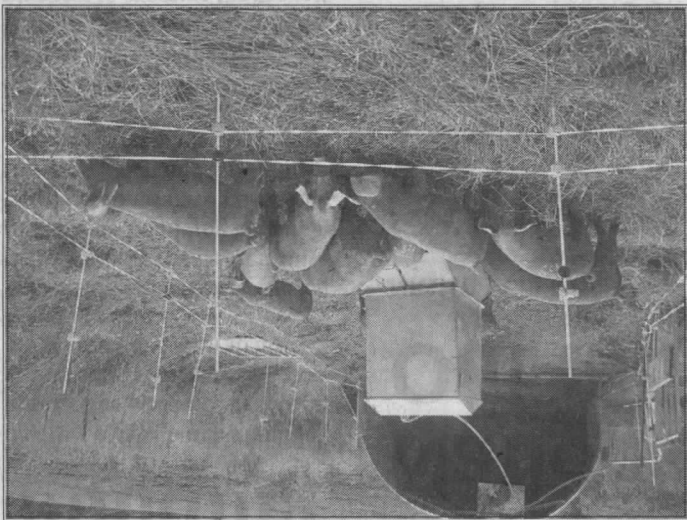
andered around cones, hopped over a bridge, the kids walked

a balance beam, the sheep did

mal science and biology.

The Owens started sheep camp when they operated a 13-

Children flock to local sheep camp



Top: These piglets are learning to live inside an electric fence at the Owens Farm before being moved to a larger space. Left: Caroline Owens teaches sheep camp to 18 students at their farm in Upper Augusta Township. Right: Kids put their lambs through an obstacle course at the Owens Farm during sheep camp.

The kids learned to lead their sheep on a halter and gave them baths. They posed for a portrait with their special sheep and learned how useful the border collies are to the farm.

They also sheared sheep, dyed wool, spun the wool and crocheted with wool. With sheep living on plants, Caroline spoke about taking samples of their cud and understanding they have four stomach compartments. "They take the energy of the sun and turn it into food for people," she said during the last week of three sessions of sheep camp. Two others were held in June.

People can also adopt sheep. Adopters receive scheduled farm visits, letters about and photos of their sheep, an adoption certificate, a sheep year calendar, the sheep's fleece, priority registration to the lambing slumber party and personal notification when the sheep gives birth.

The Owens started sheep camp when they operated a 13-

Local

acre farm in New Hampshire. They raised livestock for their own needs, tending their animals in a natural setting and not using chemicals or growth stimulants. Their business started after neighbors asked if they would raise and sell extra animals. Realizing they needed a larger farm, they searched for two years before moving to 112 acres, at 2611 Mile Post Road, in 2009. They also offer guided tours of their farm.

Caroline holds a bachelor of science degree in animal science and agricultural education from Cornell University and a master's degree from Boston University. David is an engineer who runs his own database and software consulting business. He has a bachelor of science in engineering from the University of Lowell and a master's degree in biomedical engineering from Boston University.

Besides sheep, they raise chickens and pigs. Their pigs are an old heritage breed of Tamworth that nearly went extinct with their piglets recently learning to stay in an electric fence. Their full-grown pigs live within an electric fence in woods and are moved once a month. "They enjoy the grass and rooting," Caroline said of the pigs reaching 400 to 500 pounds when grown. "There is nothing more beautiful than pigs rooting in a new pasture," Caroline said.

"We have a pork tasting once a year and will do it again in September," she said. They sell grass-fed piglets and sheep along with pork, mutton and chicken.

Their farm store offers honey, pork sausages and lamb sausage with special offers throughout the year.

"Our customers want animals who have been fed good things and have lived a good life," she said. Orders can be placed at www.owensfarm.com with people coming to pick up the fresh meat when it is ready. Customers live in the area as well as Delaware and New Jersey.

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