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Shared endeavors

Twins' dedication pays off for future

By Amy Dodd Thompson
Staff Writer

Cows are just like big, playful dogs, twins Alyzabeth and Alyssa Looney say.

They sat in their home, talking about their experiences with FFA and raising show heifers. While they are comfortable with their cattle, Alyssa joked that a cow will still head-butt them.

Alyzabeth explained that the cow is just playfully trying to get to its food.

"We know our animals. We know that they're tame," said Alyssa.

The twins, recent graduates of Denton High School, have spent

a lot of time in FFA and agricultural-related activities — and it has paid off.

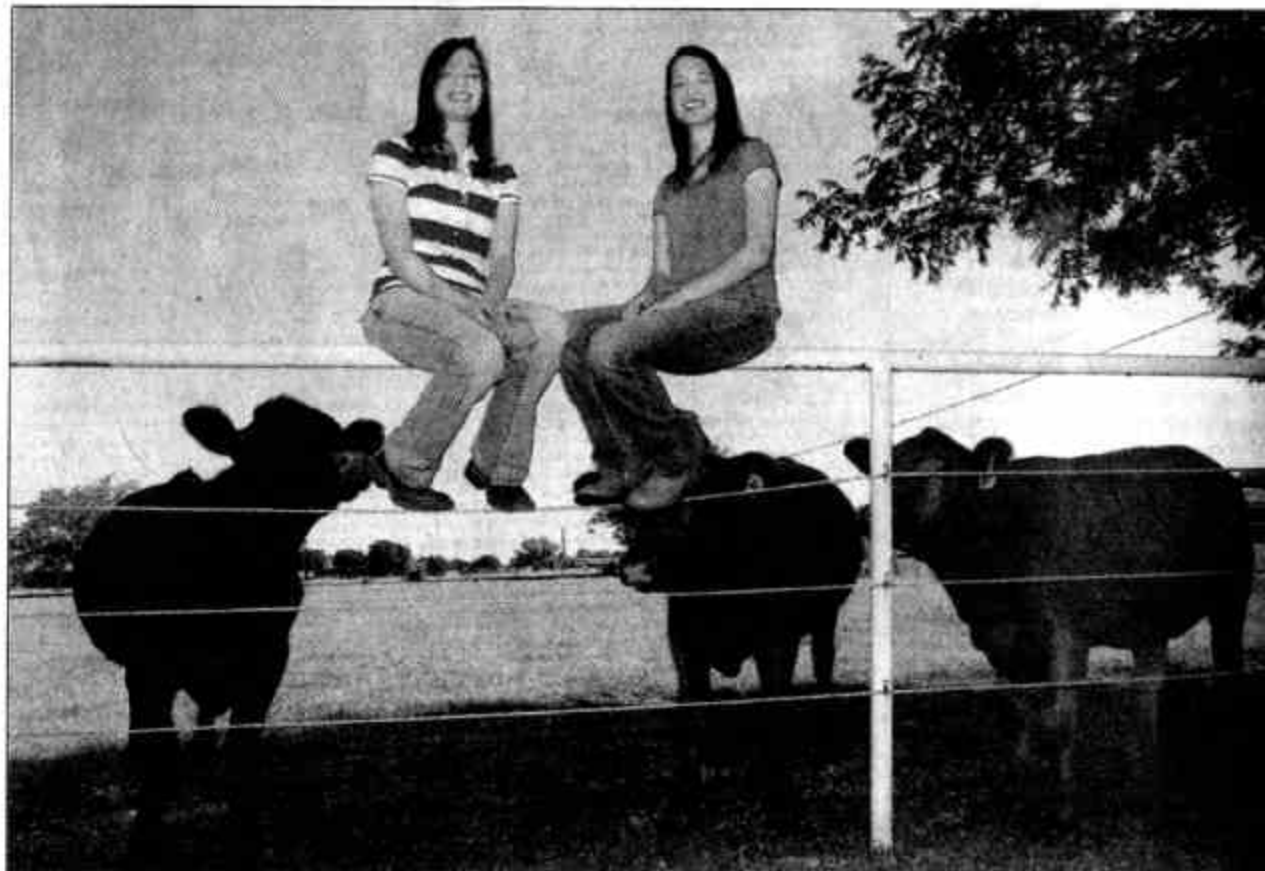
Together they have racked up about \$57,000 in agriculture-related scholarships to help cover college expenses for the next four years.

Most recently, each twin got a \$16,000 San Antonio Livestock Show scholarship.

They're keeping their fingers crossed that more scholarships are to come.

They say it'll cost them about \$20,000 a year to attend Texas A&M University, where Alyzabeth

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Twins Alyzabeth and Alyssa Looney graduated from Denton High School this year, taking with them a wealth of awards and scholarships, mostly from their involvement in FFA.

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Sisters

plans to study animal science and Alyssa to study agribusiness.

The twins, who plan to be roommates when college starts in the fall, said they've traveled to many places, including Washington, D.C., and have met a lot of people during their involvement in FFA.

The organization also has helped them learn to manage their time — preparing them for juggling schedules in college.

"You only get so much out of it [FFA] as you put into it," said Alyssa.

"The more involved you are, the better chance you have to be more successful in it," said Alyzabeth.

"They put a lot into it, too," said Denton High agricultural science teacher Diedre Williams, who was the twins' FFA adviser.

The girls largely attribute the scholarships to their FFA involvement, but also to grades and their other school activities.

The twins are motivated self-starters, Williams said, and setbacks aren't big with them.

In addition to their memberships in breeder associations, the twins were cheerleaders and members of the National Honor Society, National German Honor Society, German Club and Math Club.

They've each taken charge, too, holding several leadership positions in their high school associations.

During their senior year, Alyzabeth was named varsity cheerleading captain, and Alyssa was crowned queen of the Texas Red Angus Association. In both

"You only get so much out of it [FFA] as you put into it."

— Alyssa Looney, Denton High School graduate

their FFA chapter and German Club, Alyssa served as president and Alyzabeth was vice president. Alyzabeth was president of Denton High's chapter of the National Honor Society; her twin was vice president.

Their involvement in FFA doesn't end with high school.

They still headed to shows this summer, as well as the state FFA Agriscience Fair in July — where they placed first last year for their project "What's Sizzlin'?", a bacon value comparison.

Winning state in their division was memorable, said Williams, because no one was expecting it.

That win took them to the national competition in Indianapolis, Ind., where they placed third.

Alyzabeth and Alyssa are in the same groups, they say, because they share the same interests.

As for their differences, Alyzabeth is a "real animal person," while her sister is more into the business side of agriculture, said Williams.

Alyssa, though, is a little more "girly girl," Williams said.

Alyssa agreed to that, as did Alyzabeth, who said Alyssa is the more social, outgoing one.

"Depending on what it is, one girl will have a little more drive than the other," said Williams. They're competitive, she said, but not so much that it'll affect their

relationship.

When the twins purchase heifers for shows, they make sure they're in different classes, Williams said, so they're not competing against each other.

"I've been up and down the road with those girls for four years," Williams said, referring to trips to shows and contests. "We've always had fun."

The twins had been around commercial cattle and already had an interest in them before they joined FFA as high school freshmen.

So when it came to showing cattle, Alyssa said, "We all learned together."

She was referring to the girls' whole family — their father, mother and 11-year-old brother.

With show cattle, duties include grooming, keeping them on strict diets and getting them trained on a halter.

The teens purchased their heifers as calves. While they're little, young heifers are easier to train, they say.

They have only been in the practice for a few years, but between them and their brother, they have a herd of about 30 heifers.

They've had some hardships, though, when they've lost an animal.

In one case, a very young calf had to be nursed and brought into the house for care.

Alyzabeth said FFA offers something for everyone.

"It's a lot more than what people think it is," she said.

"It's gotten broader than only just farming," Alyssa said.

AMY DODD THOMPSON can be reached at 940-566-6876. Her e-mail address is athompson@dentonrc.com.