

## Legislators Told Dairymen Need 8% Boost

Federal legislators were told last week that dairymen must have an 8% boost in their Class I milk price in order to keep pace with rising production costs and to forestall an impending crisis in the dairy business.

At a breakfast meeting in Washington, D.C. conducted for the Northeast lawmakers by Eastern Milk Producers Association, General Manager John C. York pointed out that federal order milk pricing must be revised to be more realistic in covering farm production costs and in line with what consumers are able to buy.

"In other words," said Mr. York, "Eastern feels it is logical that there be some sort of escalator clause in federal milk order formulas of the Northeast — based on three economic movers: wholesale commodity price index, prices paid by farmers index and consumers' disposable income index. Most of our legislators have already signified you are in agreement on a pricing formula of this type."

With the latest round of industrial wage increases, highlighted by the \$2,000 package increase granted to Ford auto workers, farm costs are in for another cycle of crunching cost rises for dairymen. Just to keep somewhat near even with this last round of cost hikes, dairymen must have an 8% increase—a boost of 70¢ per hundredweight in Class I milk prices.

"Our suggested pricing formula, which includes three economic movers for each area (New York-New Jersey and New England marketing areas)

will improve the farm price of milk just about the 8% that we have discussed earlier for New York and New England producers.

"Eastern will present its proposal at the Class I hearing in New York City on December 5, which is being held to study the pricing formulas of the New York-New Jersey and the New England marketing orders," pointed out Mr. York.

"Eastern is not supporting those proposals in the call of the hearing which provide for establishing one formula for the pricing of Class I milk in both New York and New England," he said. "Those proposals offered by other cooperatives, which establish one formula for both markets, with

New York 10 cents below New England, do not represent any improvement in the level of prices in the New England market, nor any significant improvement in the New York market."

Mr. York and other members of the Eastern delegation pointed out that some 8,700 dairymen of the northeast have gone out of business in just two years.

This means that some \$150 million in dairy income has been affected and some \$435 million investment in farm facilities have been disrupted — much of the land being unused and many of the buildings and equipment lying dormant and rusting. This has been having a detrimental effect on other local businesses and economies as well, they said.

"Emphasizing that when dair-

ymen discontinue milk production, they are unlikely to ever return, the Eastern group cited the vast investment required to go into the dairy business. Also emphasized as an economic blow to the area was that dairying is the largest single industry in both New York and Vermont, and the second largest industry in Pennsylvania.

Farm dispersals have been taking place at an alarming rate for the past three years because farm milk prices have remained relatively fixed by federal order, while farm production costs have risen at rapid rates, reminded Mr. York.

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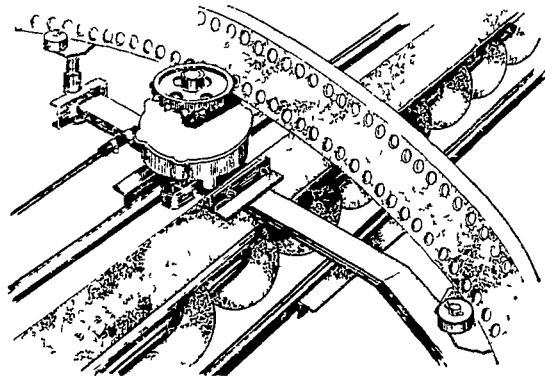
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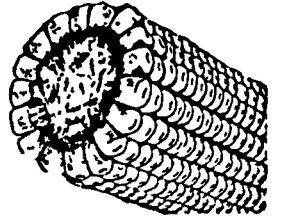
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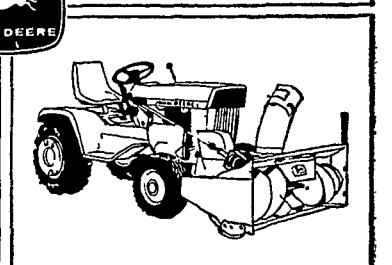
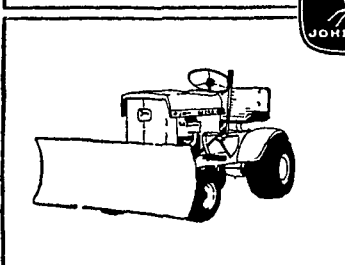
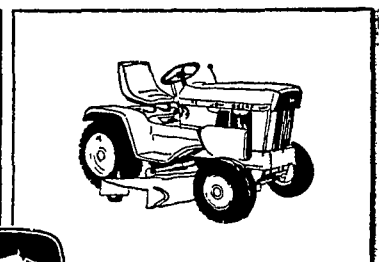
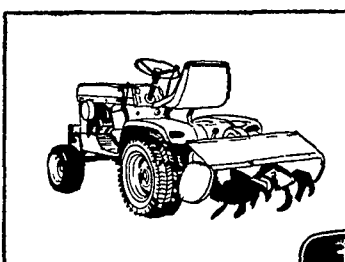
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