

National Farm Meeting Dates

Following are some of the upcoming national farm organization meeting dates and places:

American Dairy Association, annual meeting, Pick Congress Hotel, Chicago, March 23-25

Fourth Annual California Poultry Health Symposium, University of California, Davis, March 25

National Peanut Council, annual meeting, Broadwater Beach, Biloxi, Mississippi, April 5-7

National Independent Dairies Association, annual meeting, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., April 5-7

National Association of Margarine Manufacturers, annual meeting, Camelback Hotel, Scottsdale, Arizona, April 8-12

National Cheese Institute and American Butter Institute, annual meeting, La Salle Hotel, Chicago, April 13-14

23rd Annual Delmarva Chicken Festival, Princess Anne, Md., June 11-13

Are Milk Prices Too High?

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But likely with a continued lessening importance on butterfat

What About Fat?

"What will we do with that fat?" There is a bill in Congress to remove butterfat from the price support program.

"If anyone thinks that a reduction in the price of butterfat can be compensated by a higher price on solids not-fat, particularly for manufacturing usage, I would suggest they think hard before they approve action in that matter."

He continued, "How we distribute those dairy products is another big question mark. Certainly the increasing price of labor is progressively forcing the elimination of retail milk delivery."

"How long this (retail milk delivery) will go on even in smaller metropolitan areas like Lancaster, Harrisburg, Reading, etc., is debatable. Producer-dealer competition in the Commonwealth is rugged, to say the least."

He sees the federal emphasis on feeding poor people as a boost for milk usage, but notes the

school milk program may be eliminated.

"We face a tremendous pressure from foreign countries as to our import restrictions on dairy products. According to recent information, the six common economic countries of Europe have tremendous holding both of butterfat and solids not-fat — something like 400 million tons of butter, and probably more than that as nonfat powder," he said.

Nixon called for streamlining federal milk inspection procedures so as to reduce the administrative costs, which now run from three to five cents per hundredweight.

He also suggested a better system of milk classification may be needed. One approach, he said, "would be to price milk on protein content to encourage production of lower fat, higher protein milk."

Milk Big Here

Nixon emphasized that the Northeast in general and Lancaster County in particular has a growing stake in milk production.

In the 11 Northeastern states, milk production in 1969, relative to the 1948-58 average, was up 71 billion pounds. But in the rest of the country in that same period, production was down 51 billion pounds.

He noted that in Lancaster County production increased from 564 million pounds in 1967 to 597 million pounds in 1968, a 5.8 per cent increase in production. He believes there was also a large increase in the county in 1969.

Nixon also spoke out strongly against what he termed "the cooperative payment provision," which he said gives cooperatives an unfair competitive advantage over traditional milk dealers, producers or proprietary handlers. Besides being vice president of Penn Dairies, Nixon is president of Lancaster Milk Company.

Nixon explained that under the law, the cooperatives can deduct certain items from the checks they pay dairymen. These cooperative deductions are made for expenses such as hauling, supplies and others.

Unfair Competition

"The experience in New York

has been that these monies (deducted by the cooperatives) have been used rather generously to build manufacturing plants and in other ways unfairly compete against proprietary handlers."

The proprietary handlers are prohibited by law from making similar deductions and so are placed a severe competitive disadvantage, Nixon explained.

"Now if we as proprietaries are not allowed to make deductions as allowed by cooperatives, and must pay the legal minimum prices for the milk — and the cooperative need not — you can readily understand that we are in a competitive box."

He also asked dairymen, "If you force proprietaries out of the milk business, and you get no more — and perhaps less — than you now receive in your milk checks, who's kidding whom?"

Pointing out that the second largest dairy chain in the U.S., Borden, has moved out of the milk and ice cream business in eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and metropolitan New York, and all of northern California, Nixon said, "The erosion in proprietary dairy firms throughout the country and in our own commonwealth is very real and very serious."

Milk Quality?

Nixon also asserted that the direction the cooperatives are now taking will lead to the reappearance of milk quality problems.

"Up to this time, the handler buying the milk whether directly from the farmer or through a cooperative, has been responsible for the quality work at the farm and has paid for it."

"Under the new pressures built up since last summer, serious efforts are being made by a number of firms to have these duties absorbed by the cooperatives, and the costs passed on by the cooperatives to the farmers. Certainly quality and field work cost money, even to a cooperative."

"My opinion is that the system which has been used historically is a good one, has resulted in high quality milk. The direction we are now going will bring about quality problems which we thought had disappeared."

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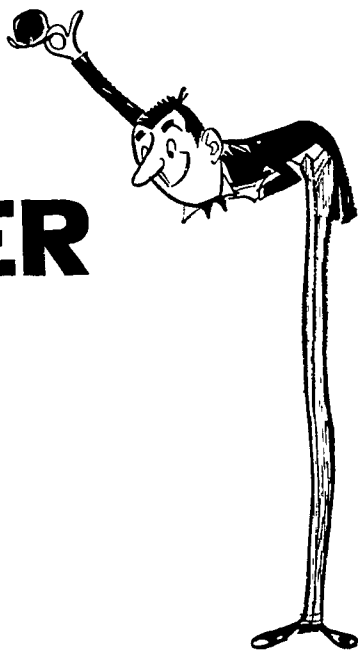
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