

# USDA Views Dairying in the '70's

The good news for dairy producers is the prospect of higher milk prices and bigger cash receipts in the decade of the 1970's, according to the USDA's Farm Index.

Also on the horizon a closer balance between supply and demand of dairy products, perhaps even total disappearance of surpluses by the year 1980.

Gross receipts from marketings of milk and cream are expected to rise 25 to 35 per cent. Sales in 1969 exceeded \$6.1 billion.

Still greater increases are envisioned for average gross sales per farm. They may rise to \$40,000-\$45,000 by 1980, nearly three times the average for 1969.

(These are the "would be" prospects with the dairy support level and Federal order pricing as they were in 1969.)

But there will be fewer farms to share in this increase. Farm numbers have trended downward in the postwar period, and will continue to decline in the '70's.

USDA outlookers foresee a 50 per cent drop in commercial dairy farms by 1980. They now number around 400,000.

Cow numbers would be down too—by roughly one third from 1969's average count of 12.7 million.

Total milk production would drop off as a consequence, but not as sharply as farm and cow numbers.

One reason is that average milk output per cow is expected to increase through improved breeding management, and feeding practices. By 1980, per-cow output may be up 30 per cent from the 9,158 pounds in 1969.

Also, those 200,000 farms will be keeping larger herds—average herd size, today about 30 cows, will rise to about 50. And, herds of over 100 cows will become more common.

All this considered, milk production in 1980 could drop well below the 116 billion pounds produced last year.

On the demand side, per capita consumption will not in-

crease according to the USDA. Since 1942 the per capita figure has declined at an annual average of nearly 10 pounds (measured in milk equivalent fat solid basis)—from 832 pounds to 565 pounds in 1969.

Butter and high fat products will account for most of the falloff in demand during the 1970's.

On the other hand consumption of products with low fat content will rise, including low fat and skim milks, ice milk cottage cheese, and whey solids.

Whey solids have been going mainly into livestock rations. But they have a promising market potential for use in bakery products, prepared foods, can dies, and ice cream.

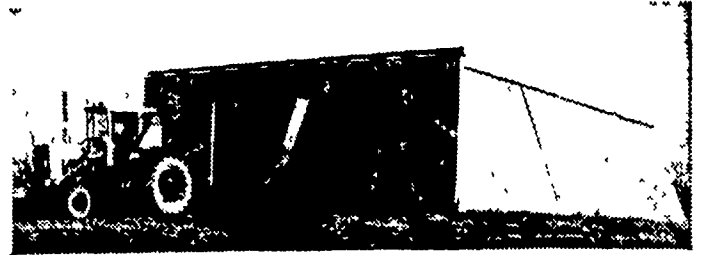
With milk production moving more closely in line with demand, the economists anticipate a winding of dairy surpluses.

In addition, nearly all marketings would be commercial sales, inasmuch as government purchases would be minimal at the higher market prices being projected.

The gain in milk prices would reflect the closer balance in supply and demand, a general price rise in the U.S. economy, and growing efficiency in as (Continued on Page 29)

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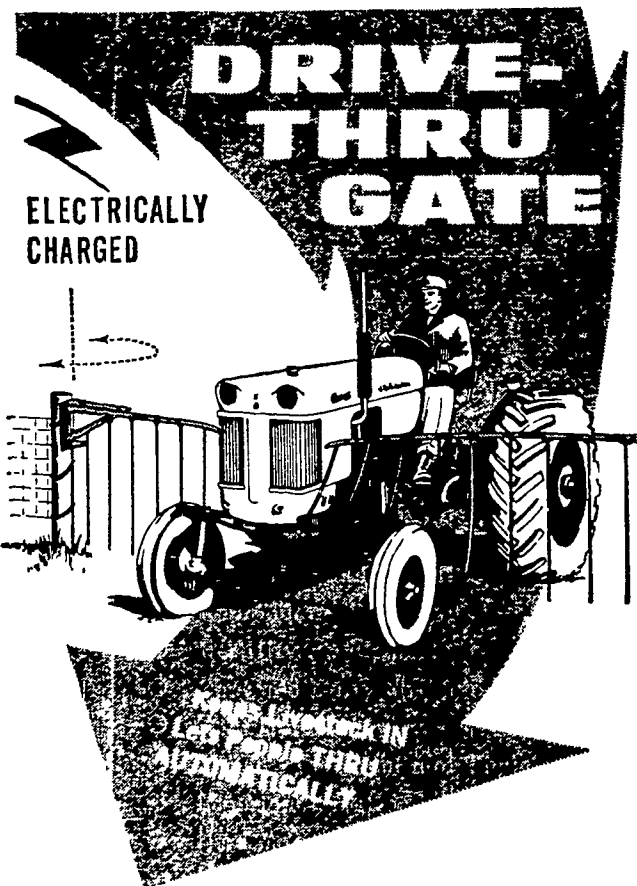
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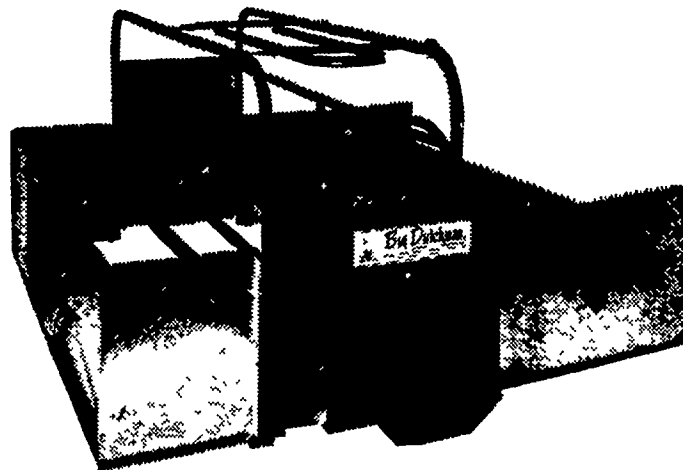
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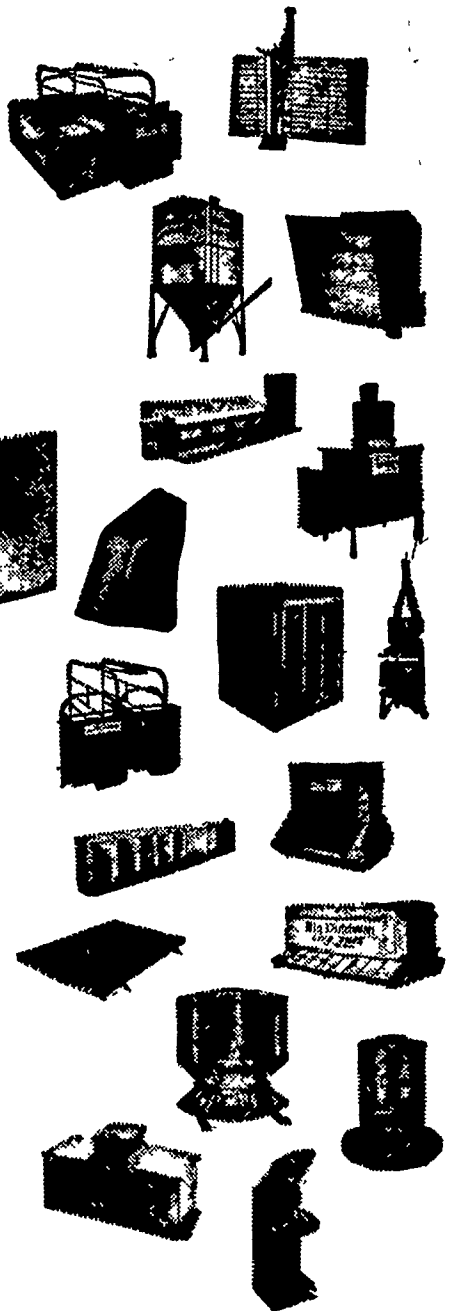
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