

Merrill Urges 'Preservation of Independent Milk Firms'

Howard Merrill, President of Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative Association, Inc., discussed the causes of some of

the marketing problems which beset the dairy industry as he delivered his annual address to several hundred delegates and industry leaders in Hotel Syracuse Wednesday (June 9).

The occasion marked the Co-operative's forty-ninth annual convention. Since its beginning in 1922, Eastern has grown to become the nation's leading grade "A" milk bargaining cooperative with nearly 10,000 dairy farmer members in six states of the northeast region. Eastern markets over 2,750,000-000 pounds of milk to independent milk companies in all five federal order markets in the east.

Merrill said, "Buyers of milk must be assured a cost of product approximately equal to the cost of their principal competitors. Operating cooperatives engaged in processing and packaging milk are extracting substantial membership dues in addition to cooperative payments in the New York Pool and using these moneys to underbid independent milk companies in the marketplace.

"This, I think, is the number one issue of the dairy industry today, as well as it was a year ago. If cooperative members who supply milk to processing and packaging cooperatives are willing to have these cooperatives extract substantial membership dues to subsidize the sale of their product, I think we will continue to have serious marketing conditions, not only in this market but across the United States.

"Independent proprietary milk companies must pay the federal order minimum blend price and they cannot be expected to compete under unfair competitive conditions of this nature.

"We will not let up on our efforts to see that there is a meaningful bonding law in the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont. We will also continue to urge that each farmer in each of those states shall be given the opportunity to make up his own decision as to whether or not he should be a contributor to money used for milk promotion and research.

"We are concerned about the loopholes in the National Agricultural Marketing and Bargaining Act.

"And we want to retain the Department of Agriculture, and have so urged with particular emphasis on re-allocating the cost of certain items charged to the Department of Agriculture which should be charged to

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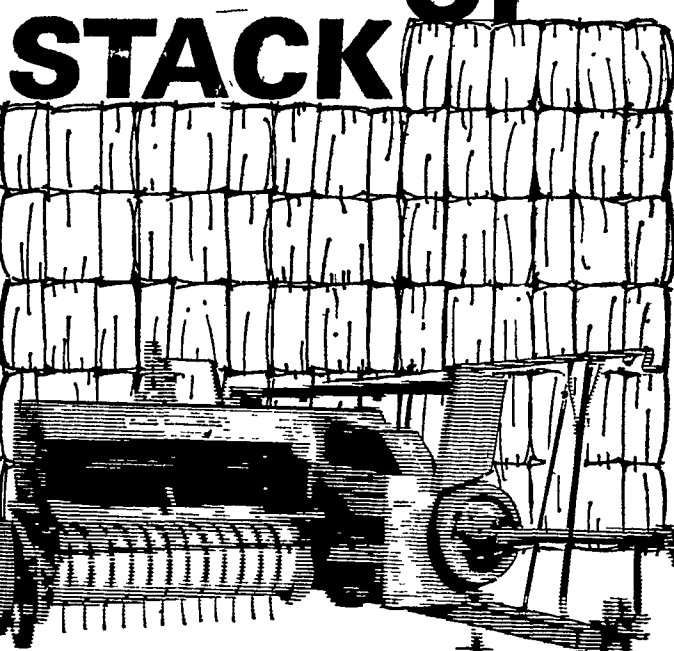
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