

FARM TRENDS

(Continued from Page 1)

because of increased beef cattle prices expected during early 1974.

Milk output could move above year-earlier levels during the latter part of 1974. Farmers are likely to produce larger feed crops this year, so dairy feed

supplies should be larger and prices more reasonable in late 1974. Improved milk-feed price relationships will likely cause milk output per cow this year to resume its long uptrend. In contrast, milk cow numbers will probably decline further.

Farm production of milk in 1973 totaled 115.6 billion pounds, some 3½ percent below 1972. High feed prices reduced milk output per cow, the first drop in almost 30 years, and together with strong slaughter cow prices, caused the rate of decline in milk cow numbers to accelerate. Production was down all year, although the rate of decline slackened somewhat by year-end.

Farm milk prices have risen rapidly since last August, and in February stood at \$8.95 per 100 pounds, up some 36 percent from a year earlier. Manufacturing milk prices at \$8.18 per 100 pounds were about 101 percent of the parity equivalent and some 49 percent above February 1973. Milk prices will continue well above year-earlier levels during this first half of 1974. Farm price margins over 1973 levels may narrow later in 1974 if milk production does recover.

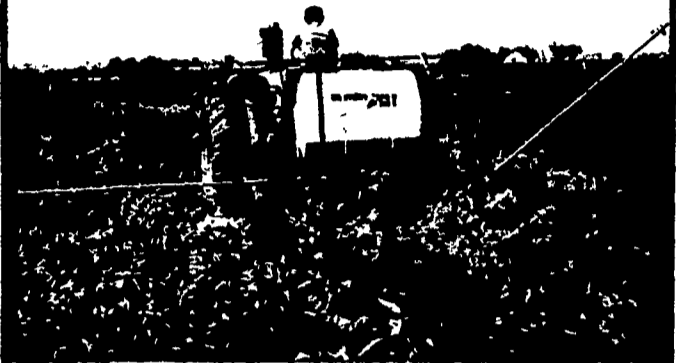
Increased milk prices will push cash receipts from dairying up-again this year -- perhaps to around \$9½ billion. Receipts rose some 13 percent in 1973 to about \$8.1 billion as higher prices more than offset lower milk marketings by farmers. However, production costs, particularly feed costs, rose even faster.

In 1973, per capita civilian consumption averaged 557 pounds milk equivalent, holding about stable for the second successive year. This was in contrast to steady declines for a number of prior years. The drop in per capita consumption may again resume this

year, with the likelihood of declining commercial usage and fewer dairy products being available for donation.

Output of manufactured dairy products in 1973 declined some 5 percent, with butter and nonfat dry milk showing the largest declines. American cheese production rallied at the end of the year, bringing 1973 output around 1 percent above the previous year, the smallest gain since 1969. In early 1974, butter and nonfat dry milk output continued well below a year earlier, but American cheese production was up about a fourth.

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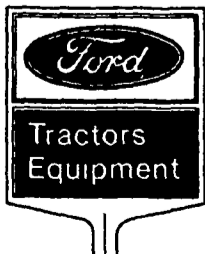
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Deadline Extended On Quality Control Proposal

The deadline for receiving public comments on a proposal concerning meat and poultry plant quality control programs has been extended to May 10. The deadline for submitting such comments had been March 22.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said the comment period was extended because

of public interest and requests for additional time for considering and commenting on the proposal.

APHIS officials explained that the proposal would provide for the approval and use of quality control systems voluntarily installed by meat and poultry processing plants. These systems would in turn be monitored by federal meat and poultry inspectors to augment their own observations and sampling of processed products in checking for wholesomeness and accurate labeling.

Comments on the proposal should be sent in duplicate to the USDA Hearing Clerk, Washington, D. C. 20250.

Anyone interested in presenting his views orally should immediately contact the Systems Development and Sanitation Staff, APHIS, USDA, Washington, D. C. 20250. Records of oral comments, as well as written views, will be available for public review in the Hearing Clerk's office during normal business hours.

A notice concerning the extension in the comment period is scheduled to be published in the March 22 Federal Register.

4-H Livestock Judging Moved

To Louisville

The 1974 National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest will be moved from the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago to the North American Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky., Nov. 21-22, according to Dr. E. Dean Vaughan, Assistant Administrator for 4-H - Youth Programs of the Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Teams from 32 states participated in this 4-H event last year.

The contest has been held in Chicago since it began 50 years ago. As plans were being made to establish the North American Livestock Exposition, state 4-H judging coaches and livestock specialists suggested the move to this new exposition. A survey of state 4-H Leaders in consultation with coaches and livestock specialists led to the decision to move the event to Louisville because of its central location for participating states.

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