

Farm Commentary

by Dick Wanner

U.S. Milk Cow Numbers Down Marginally

The decline from a year ago in milk cow numbers continues at less than 1 percent, the lowest rate since the mid-1950's. Low slaughter cow prices will likely discourage herd culling throughout 1975, and the continued lack of off-farm employment opportunities may keep more dairy farmers in business. Coupled with large numbers of herd replacements on hand, this would likely limit the drop in milk cow numbers in 1975.

Production later this year will depend largely on prices for feed and milk, as well as on the slaughter cattle market and the general economic situation. If large feed grain and soybean crops materialize this year and feed prices moderate, feeding rates could pick up, bringing more normal gains in output per cow. Under these conditions, we could see strong gains in milk production later on this year.

On the other hand, another disastrous crop like last year's would mean continued high feed prices and forestall an increase in milk production during the second half.

For all of 1975, milk production is likely to total around 1 billion pounds above 1974's 115.4 billion pounds. Under the most favorable conditions output could go even higher.

Milk production was slightly above year-earlier levels in March. Farmers have cut back grain and concentrate feeding, thus limiting gains in output per cow. These small gains just barely offset the relatively small decline in milk cow numbers.

Grade A milk marketings in 1974 totaled 86 billion pounds, 78 percent of all milk sold to plants by farmers. Although increasing steadily over the years, Grade A marketings have gained more slowly since 1971 when 76 percent of the milk was Grade A. On the other hand, Grade B marketings declined as dairy farmers continued to convert to Grade A production or left dairying.

Effective April 1, USDA raised the support purchase prices for American cheese by 2 cents to 79.25 cents per pound and for butter by 1.25 cents to 70.75 cents per pound at New York. Nonfat dry milk prices were left at 60.6 cents per pound.

House Sustains Farm Bill Veto

By a substantial margin, the House failed to override a presidential veto Tuesday and killed a one-year emergency farm bill that the administration said could raise food prices slightly and force imposition of production controls.

The vote, marking the first veto battle of the 94th Congress, was easily won by President Ford. The House voted 245 to 182, 40 votes short of the necessary two-thirds needed to override.

Ford said the bill would cost the government \$183 billion in fiscal year 1976 and cited it as "an example of increased, nonessential spending" that would aggravate this attempt to keep deficit spending for the fiscal year to \$60 billion.

This was done to provide greater assurance that the annual average farm price of manufacturing milk will equal the previously announced support price of \$7.24 per 100 pounds in the 1975-76 marketing year.

Farm prices of milk have shown near average seasonal drops since the beginning of the year and, at \$8.05 per 100 pounds, in April were 9 percent below a year ago. Manufacturing milk prices have held about steady since January with wholesale dairy prices close to CCC support purchase prices. Farm milk prices are likely to show only small seasonal drops through the flush production season but could be above a year ago by early summer.

Not a single case of hog cholera was reported in the United States during the past year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) said today. The last outbreak occurred May 4, 1974 in Puerto Rico. The last case in any of the 50 states was diagnosed Feb. 7, 1974 in Mississippi.

Dr. John Hejl, deputy administrator, Veterinary Services, of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), said, however, that surveillance for this dreaded swine disease must continue. "We want to make sure," he said, "that all traces of hog cholera virus have been eliminated from the U.S. hog population before the disease is officially declared eradicated."

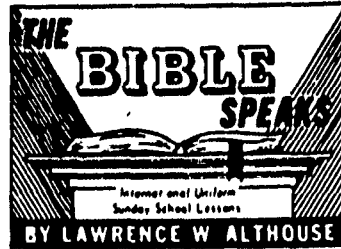
An official declaration of hog cholera being eradicated from the entire United States could come in November, provided there are no more outbreaks. An 18-month waiting period after the last outbreak was recommended by swine disease experts.

"Eradication progress has already saved American hog producers hundreds of millions of dollars," said Dr. Hejl, "in terms of greatly reduced herd losses and the elimination of vaccine costs." Use of hog cholera vaccine was halted in 1969. In addition, Dr. Hejl noted that Great Britain recently lifted a 20-year import ban against American pork because of U.S. eradication achievements to date.

Democratic leaders sought to pass the bill over Ford's opposition and caucus chairman Philip Burton of California ended debate by crying out, "Nuts to Butz! Let's override." The reference was to Agriculture Secretary Earl L. Butz, who stated publicly his opposition to the bill even before Congress hammered it into final shape.

Two earlier versions of the measure passed the House 259-162 and 248-166.

The bill would have increased the garget prices and rates for production loans, for which the crops are used as collateral, for the 1975 crops of wheat, corn and cotton.



WHERE THE BUCK STOPS

Lesson for May 18, 1975

Background Scripture: Ezekiel 18.

Devotional Reading: Ezekiel 14:12 - 20.

It is said that the late President Harry S. Truman had a plaque on his desk that proclaimed: "THE BUCK STOPS HERE!" To him it was a daily reminder that ultimately all responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the United States government resided with him. There was no other person to whom he could rightly pass off that responsibility.

"Sour Grapes"

This is true not only in politics, but also in religion. The dictum, "THE BUCK STOPS HERE," is religiously expressed in the teaching that each person is responsible for his or her own soul. It is the one responsibility we cannot cast off on others, although we may try!

As Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent, so God's children are gifted in the ancient art of "passing the buck." In the days of Ezekiel the prophet, there was a popular proverb fondly quoted by the buck-passers in the days of Israel's Babylonian captivity: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." The Jews in exile blamed all their misfortunes on the evil deeds of their fathers in Israel.

To a certain degree, there was justice in this allegation: the prophets themselves had proclaimed that the Babylonian captivity was caused by the unrepentant rebelliousness of Israel. But the Jews in exile continued to blame everything on their forefathers who had become convenient scapegoats.

People today still are influenced by this "sour grapes" attitude. Collectively they may blame their misfortunes on previous generations. Individually, they will seek to transfer their personal responsibility to their parents, their environment, the ethnic or religious background, their economic class, their educational opportunities, or just plain "bad breaks."

"A new heart and a new spirit"

As Ezekiel indicated, however, that is never an adequate defense: "As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:3, 4).

The proverb is a cop-out: God is the Lord of each generation, not just a selected few and he judges each man for his own sins. If a man is righteous in God's sight - if he lives by God's commandments - God will not punish him for the sins of someone else. "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his own ways..." (18:30).



NOW IS THE TIME...

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone 394-6851

To Make Grass Silage

A lot of first cutting hay is put in silos. Weather conditions often make it very difficult to make hay out of the first cutting so putting it in the silo is an excellent choice. A silage preservative is necessary only when silage is not wilted to 65 percent or less moisture, or if freedom from possible objectionable odors is necessary. Chemical-type preservatives can help reduce fermentation loss. However, they cannot reduce the considerable losses from seepage, which may occur when material is put in the upright silo at over 65-70 percent moisture. The use of corn and cob chop, at the rate of 100-200 pounds per ton of forage, is a good feed additive. This will increase the energy level of the hay-crop silage.

To Cull Unprofitable Cows

One reason for the recent increase in milk production is the low cull cow prices. The economics of this strategy by dairymen is questionable. First, cull cow prices will probably stay low for at least the next year. Second, a high producing cow is more profitable than a low producing cow, especially in these times of high feed costs. Using present feed prices and \$8 per cwt. milk, a cow milking 70 pounds of 3.5 B.F. milk per day will return more than \$3.00 income over feed costs.

This points up the importance of good records to know the production level of each cow. Records are necessary to make accurate

decisions on culling and feeding cows.

To Control Pesticide Drift

The term "pesticide drift" means the movement of pesticide from the area you intend to use it to other areas. There are two kinds of pesticide drift - particle drift and vapor drift. Spary or dust particle drift occurs at the time of application when small droplets or dust particles are carried by air movement. Vapor drift is caused by pesticide fumes from the application site as the pesticide evaporates. These fumes are also carried by air movement.

To help control pesticide drift use low volatile formulations, low pressure and large capacity nozzles when spraying.

Also, release the spray near the crops or soil surface and avoid spraying when temperatures are high. Only spray when the wind velocity is low and blowing away from sensitive crops.

To Be Alert For Alfalfa Weevil

Alfalfa is really growing under the excellent conditions we are having. This means we must keep a close watch for the alfalfa weevil from now until harvest. We suggest that any insecticide application be delayed until approximately 60-70 percent of the plants show slight feeding damage at the tips. Some fields can be harvested early to prevent weevil damage. When this is done, keep a close check on the stubble to make sure the new growth is not being damaged. The stubble may need spray protection to permit the new shoots to develop.

Farm Calendar

Tuesday, May 20

7:30 p.m. - Ephrata Area Young Farmer monthly meeting program will center on baler trouble shooting. Ephrata Senior High School Ag classroom.

Friday, May 23

7:00 p.m. - Pa. Egg Marketing Association meeting at the Sheraton-Conestoga in Lancaster.

Saturday, May 24
Pa. Sheep Field Day in Susquehanna County.

Lebanon Valley Expo Corp. Square Dance at the Lebanon Fairgrounds 8:30 p.m.

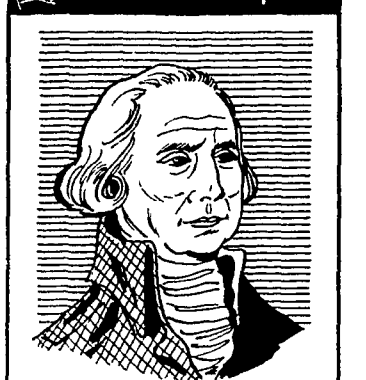
Tuesday, June 3

Deadline for advertising and news for the annual Lancaster Farming Dairy Issue.

Wednesday, June 4

Lancaster County Conservation District Meeting at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center 7:30 p.m.

American Viewpoints



Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious ideals
George Washington