

# 'We're on threshold of strong marketing year'

## 'Yo-yo' milk prices firming

LANCASTER, PA. - During the past 19 months the dairy industry has seen milk prices moving up and down like a yo-yo, said Dr. Paul E. Hand, economist, Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative, as he addressed the delegates and guests attending Inter-State's 58th annual meeting here last week. Dr. Hand noted blend prices have ranged from \$9.58 in April 1974, to \$8.00 in August 1974, to \$9.06 in August 1975, to the present blend price of \$9.96 for October.

"Although improvement has been slow in coming - slower than needed by milk producers - we can report that there was a continued improvement through 1975, and we are on the threshold of a strong marketing year in 1976," said Hand. He credited the depressed price situation, which prevailed during most of the last months, a result of the Administration's decision to import large volumes of manufactured dairy products in the spring of 1974.

"At a time when national production was meeting a level of domestic needs, and increasing," he said, "this

import decision was disastrous to the dairy industry." He also noted that the Minnesota-Wisconsin price dropped from \$8.15 in March to \$6.29 in July, which was reflected directly in a decline in the Class I price over a comparable four-month period.

Dairy farmers, both nationally and in the Middle Atlantic region, responded to this disastrous decline by culling heavily and feeding less, resulting in a lower production per cow, he said. Today production levels continue below 1974 levels as a hangover from this period.

Hand predicted, barring such disasters as increased imports, that prices will not fall more than 75 cents from this fall's highest level. Citing strengthened sales coupled with the recent expansion of the marketing area, he also predicted Class I utilization for 1976 should exceed 1975 levels and could result in 1976 having the highest utilization in the history of the middle Atlantic Order.

"Based on the trend of declining numbers of dairy farmers, and good demand for dairy products," said Dr. Hand, "we see little danger of an over-production of milk in this area or nationally." He noted 1976 may be the strongest year in the history of the dairy industry in the Middle Atlantic area, with the possibility of blend prices averaging near \$10.00 cwt.

Hand noted the expansion of the Middle Atlantic Order into southeastern and south central Pennsylvania and Washington County, Maryland, resulted in the addition of about 31 new handlers, 600 new producers, and the regulation of about 60 producer-handlers. He noted several dealers have protested the expansion in central Pennsylvania and are not paying into the pooling fund. "These dealers receive milk from about 300 or half the number of new producers, delaying the improvement in blend prices and Class I utilization which would result from all new handlers complying with the order." He said this expected improvement was about 8 cents in the blend price and 3 percent in utilization, while the actual increase was nearer 5 cents in the blend price.

Hand expressed hope that new personnel in the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board will fulfill the law and restore a degree of confidence in the PMMB. He also reported that Inter-State's management has been working with a pricing committee of the National Milk Producers Federation, which has recommended a new formula for determining on-farm milk prices.

Regarding the resolution passed at the 1974 annual meeting requesting investigating the possibility of pricing milk in accordance to its protein content, Dr. Hand cited studies noting two major problems: first, there is no specific market value for protein, and; second, accurate testing is not yet financially feasible.



Henry Lapp, Gap, Pa., was named Outstanding Power Choring Dealer at the Annual Jamesway Dealer Sales Meeting held recently at Carlisle. Henry Lapp, right, representing the dealership, received a recognition plaque for outstanding sales and service from John Belstra. Dealers were commended for outstanding sales of Jamesway Power Choring Products and received information regarding new products, product improvements and their 1976 Marketing Program.

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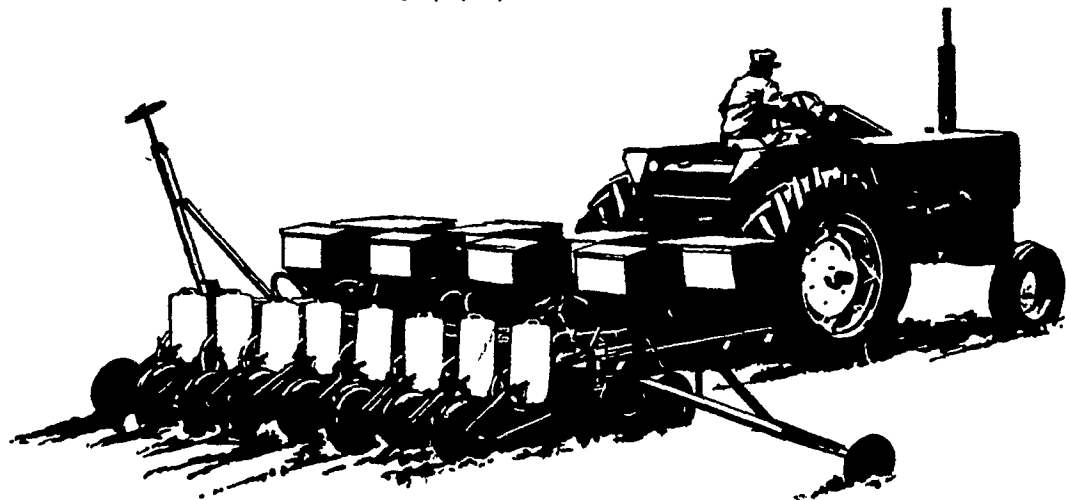
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Construction cranes hover about the center of Pennsylvania Power & Light Company's Susquehanna Steam Electric Station construction site near Berwick, Pa., doing the heavy lifting for the 2,258 workers who are building the 2,100,000-kilowatt nuclear generating project. The first unit is scheduled to go into commercial operation in late 1980, and the second in early 1982. Construction is currently at the 14.4 per cent completion stage. The dark conical shapes are the steel liner plate of the reactor containments, which will eventually be surrounded by six feet of reinforced concrete.

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