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PFA officer requests milk price hike

HARRISBURG — A spokesman for a general farm organization on Tuesday requested a milk price increase of 90-cents per hundredweight for farmers in Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Area 2, Zone 2. This marketing area covers 13 counties in northcentral Pennsylvania.

Richard E. Denison, manager, Farm Management and Business Analysis Service (FM-BAService), urged the board to hike the Class I price paid to farmers to meet increasing cost. Presently, the Class I milk price is \$10.30 per hundredweight.

Denison made the request in testimony delivered at a hearing held there by the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board.

FM-BAService is a member service company of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association.

The actual price increase would bring the farmers \$11.20 per hundredweight of Class I milk, versus actual

farmer cost of \$10.15 per hundredweight

"Many times," Denison told the PMMB, "When various groups speak of farmers, they act as if some magical shroud surrounds these families. They have the feeling that economic factors affecting business, government and consumers do not affect farmers."

He explained that when taxes, labor costs and other costs go up, the dairyman suffers the same economic squeeze

"Farmers' utility bills show the same fuel adjustment clause as do ours," he remarked. "But, dairymen use five to seven times as much electricity as you and I do in our homes."

"To compensate milk producers for their costs and to provide them with a fair margin of profit, dairy farmers need a Class I price return of \$11.20," Denison testified.

A Schuylkill County farmer supported Denison's suggested Class I milk price

of \$11.20, but urged the PMMB to take into consideration young people getting established in the dairy business.

Carl W. Brown of Pine Grove said that "If the young are not able to enter or must leave the dairy industry for economic reasons, the consumer can look forward to exorbitant prices in the future."

Brown also pointed out the adverse weather conditions suffered by dairymen forcing them to purchase much of their feed requirements rather than growing it as is the tradition

Another dairyman, Mike Jarret of Lycoming County, cited production cost in-

creases of 12 to 47 per cent ofr 1976

"I believe they (increased cost figures) are good indications of the inflationary prices a farmer must consider when making management decisions on his future farming practices," Jarret testified

"The milk producer of the past has looked at his profession as a way of life, I plan to make my decisions as a businessman.

The hearing covers milk prices in 13 counties, including Potter, Tioga, Bradford, Sullivan, Lycoming, Clinton, Uniln, Montour, Columbia, Northumberland, Snyder, Schuylkill, Carbon and a portion of Luzerne.

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Potato grade standards proposed

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed establishment of the first U.S. grade standards for potatoes used to make potato chips. If adopted, the standards would provide a uniform method of determining chipping quality of potatoes and a basis for establishing prices between potato growers and chip manufacturers.

The proposal would provide an optional requirement for determining fry color of the finished product, one of the most important factors in establishing prices for the raw potatoes. Officials of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) said contracts between growers and chip manufacturers are now based partly on "satisfactory chipping quality," but this term has no standard meaning.

The proposed standard would establish two grades - U.S. No. 1 and U.S. No. 2 - with minimum size requirements of 1-7/8 and 1-3/4 inches in diameter, respectively, unless otherwise specified. Tolerances for defective

potatoes and objective methods of scoring defects would be provided.

AMS officials said the proposal is the result of two years of extensive studies and collaboration with representatives of potato growers and chip manufacturers. Although a substantial portion of the national potato crop is used by the potato chip industry, U.S. grade standards for raw products for processing currently do not include potatoes for chipping. In addition to the requirements for satisfactory chipping quality, chip manufacturers for years have used the requirements of the U.S. No. 1 grade for potatoes for fresh market in establishing purchase contracts with growers, with specifications for size and specific gravity (a measure of solids content which indicates the total amount of chips that can be obtained from the raw potatoes).

An optional requirement for specific gravity is provided in the proposal. In addition, an official USDA visual aid showing five color classifications of the finished product, with corresponding colorimeter indices, would be available for purchase.

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