

LeHi co-op in \$1-million improvement program

ALLENTOWN, Pa. — Initiation of a \$1 million plant and equipment improvement program aimed at maintaining the momentum of its recently achieved profitable position has been announced by Lehigh Valley Cooperative Farmers, according to a Philadelphia based public relations firm.

Robert P. Barry, president, said the investment is being made to achieve operating cost efficiencies and increase productivity in an effort to sustain the turn-around of the dairy which, only two years ago, was apparently on the brink of financial ruin. Barry took over management of the financially troubled cooperative in 1974 when a \$3 million loss was racked up. Since then, LeHi has experienced a remarkable recovery, capped recently by the announcement of the cooperative's first profitable quarter.

As a reorganized management team and aggressive marketing programs took hold, production efficiency and equipment improvement

became critical in the profit picture, Barry explained.

The volume of milk business is reported to be up by 30 per cent, and a \$200,000 capital program was undertaken in the Lansdale, Pa., plant to improve production of blow molded plastic bottles and to provide uniform bottling of milk.

The original molds, which produced a slightly oversized bottle, were replaced to produce a perfect container which includes a handle shaped out of one corner. These new bottles are lighter and require almost 10 per cent less plastic resin. Capacity of each machine has been increased from 20 to 28 bottles per minute, with the additional output also available for sale to other dairies.

With the addition of the Dolly Madison label to its ice cream line, extensive renovations have been undertaken in the ice cream department at the Allentown plant. Long-neglected refrigeration equipment, which under previous management had received band-aid maintenance, has been completely overhauled, resulting in a jump

in efficiency and operating cost reductions, Lehigh spokesmen announced.

In the processing of cottage cheese, standard operating procedure was to heat treat skimmed milk, used in its manufacture, not once but twice, causing a reduction in yield. Given the green light on improvements, plant engineers came up with a combination of some new equipment and re-engineering of present machines to develop a new flow control enabling the milk to be separated and sent directly to the pasteurizer in one operation. This has served to increase yield and reduce overtime.

To meet increased volume of cottage cheese business, plans are now under way for expansion of the packaging line. When completed, the improvements will bring capability in cottage cheese packaging up to 60,000 pounds per day with a projected potential of 200,000 pounds daily.

Other equipment innovations have given LeHi increased flexibility in the filling of drums as specified by customers for shipment of hard cheese. Engineers also developed and incorporated into the equipment a unique method of removing the whey from drums, cutting handling time considerably.

As an off-shoot of the facility improvement program, the development of a procedure to recycle so-called "cow water" for steam was a bonanza to the tune of saving LeHi between \$80,000 and \$100,000 a year in its heating bill, the cooperative claims.

Whey, a by-product of cheese manufacture, is 52 per cent water. The whey is condensed into its solid material by evaporating the moisture, called cow water. This previously was dissipated into the atmosphere. Now, the cow water is returned to the plant boilers to produce steam.

An added advantage is the fact that cow water returned to the boilers does not have to undergo heating since it is already at 180 degrees, as opposed to city water which is received at about 50 degrees. Furthermore, because the cow water has already been processed, chemical additives used with city water have been eliminated.

Lehigh Valley, which represents 600 farmers, is both a manufacturing and marketing cooperative and distributes a full line of dairy products in five Mid-Atlantic states. Sale in fiscal 1976 are expected to reach the \$100 million mark, Barry has stated.

Pork show held

Plainfield, Pa. — Entries in the 1976 Fall Quality Pork Show which was sponsored by the South Central Pennsylvania Pork Producers Association were judged and displayed at The Country Butcher, here, on October 19th.

The first place lightweight and grand champion of the show was a 220-pound gilt exhibited by William Ile, Newburg, R1. Carcass data on the champion is as follows: Backfat 1.1 inches, length 29.7 inches, loin-eye area 4.8 square inches and a ham-loin percentage of 44.4.

The first place heavyweight and reserve champion was a 234-pound

gilt exhibited by Clyde Strock of Mechanicsburg R2. Carcass data on the reserve champion was: Backfat 1.2 inches, length 31.0 inches, loin-eye area 4.7 square inches, and a ham-loin percentage of 41.8.

Other placings in the lightweight class were 2nd Steve Keefer, York Springs R2; 3rd Daryl Sheiss, Chambersburg R5; 4th Morton Hulse, Aspers R1; and 5th Steve Keefer, York Springs R2.

In the heavyweight class: 2nd BDM Pork Producers, Littlestown R1; 3rd Kenneth Ketterer, Newville R2; 4th BDM Pork Producers, 5th Kenneth Ketterer.

Market news explained

NEW YORK, N.Y. — News about the movement, supply and demand, and prices prevailing on the market for poultry and eggs is a must for anyone in the business.

To aid those producing, selling and buying poultry and eggs, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service has released a brochure explaining the market news service; where and how it collects market news; and how it is disseminated. The

brochure also lists the addresses and telephone numbers of AMS' 26 poultry and egg market news offices. In addition, a glossary of terms used in federal-state market news reports is given for those who may not be familiar with all of them.

For a free copy of "The Market News Service on Poultry and Eggs," write to: Information Division, AMS, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, 26 Federal Plaza, (Room 1653), New York, N.Y. 10007.



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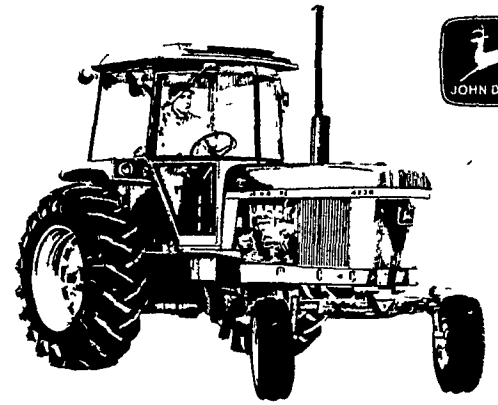
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