

Publicity

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The nuclear fallout situation was a topic of concern during meetings of both the dairy farmers and their wives at the Inter-State annual meeting.

It was noted that, as always, radiation levels would be constantly monitored by health officials.

"Last time there were reports of radiation fallout

there evolved numerous false reports concerning milk contamination," a dairy industry health specialist noted. "Our checking verified that hazardous levels were never approached".

It was further noted that milk is no more susceptible to nuclear fallout than any other commodity exposed to contaminated rainfall. People look towards the

dairy industry during such times simply because of the excellent area-wide testing program continually conducted on all milk produced.

COST-PRICE SQUEEZE

It was also noted during the annual meeting that the cost-price squeeze will once again have its effect on area dairymen, according to Dr. Paul E. Hand, economist and assistant general manager of the cooperative.

Hand, in his address before delegates of the 3,000-member marketing cooperative, predicted dairy incomes will remain about the same in 1977 as they were in 1976, but that increased costs as a result of continued inflation will continue to take its toll among area dairymen.

Hand noted his predictions are based on the assumption that forthcoming Secretaries of Agriculture will continue to set dairy price support levels at 80 per cent of parity quarterly. If such is the case, he said, 1977 Class I and Class II prices should average near or slightly above 1976 price levels.

Hand told the nearly 1,000 dairymen in attendance that on-farm prices were "pretty good" this past year compared with costs. Next year costs should be up some,

putting the dairymen in a less favorable position than for 1976.

Base and blend prices during 1977 could average below 1976, he noted. He said this was due to a higher level of production in Order 4 relative to Class I sales, resulting in lower Class I utilization. He predicted the net amount should not exceed a 15-cent per hundredweight decline over this year's base and blend prices.

Hand noted that continued production increases are foreseen but that previously announced plans for a proposed manufacturing facility in Cumberland County, Pa., should help alleviate any surplus problems after 1977. Presently it is anticipated that Inter-State and Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers will build the whole milk powder, dry milk and butter plant, jointly.

The economist further noted that production in Federal Order 4 is at a substantially higher level than in 1975. This increase in production with a lesser increase in Class I sales has resulted in a decline in Class I utilization.

"Fortunately," said Hand, "Class I and Class II prices have been at record high levels thereby maintaining

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the high rate of return to producers."

EXPANSION CITED

The financial strength of Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative has enabled the 3,000-member co-op to take advantage of new opportunities to expand and secure its position in the market place according to Robert M. Dever, treasurer of Inter-State.

Dever was referring to the cooperative's recent purchase of QC, Inc., one of the major quality testing laboratories on the East Coast, and just-announced plans to construct a whole and dry milk powder and butter manufacturing plant in Cumberland County, Pa.

"The success of our long and short term planning is directly reflected in our last year's financial statement and in the growth we have made over the previous 10 years," Dever told the gathering.

Dever noted that in the last 10 years Inter-State's sales have tripled while assets have quadrupled and the reserve account has grown from \$900,000 to over \$3 million. During this same period, he said, member dues have increased only once, from six to eight cents

on every hundred pounds of milk marketed.

The net costs to members, Dever reported, was held to just 4.7 cents per hundredweight. This approximates less than one-half cent per gallon.

Reporting on the record year just completed in which Inter-State marketed over 1.7 billion pounds of member milk, Dever noted that gross sales topped \$192 million - an all time record. Net savings during that period exceeded \$700,000.

Explaining Inter-State's investment program, Dever noted that certificates of deposit and commercial paper during the past year has generated additional income of over \$192,000 in interest.

"This revolving fund," Dever said, "not only makes money for the membership, but it also gives the cooperative some financial leeway. It enables us to guarantee payments to members, it provides us a position of strength from which to bargain and it gives us a wide base for financial growth."

"With a net operating cost of only 4.7 cents a hundredweight," said Dever, "it would cost you more to be a non-member."

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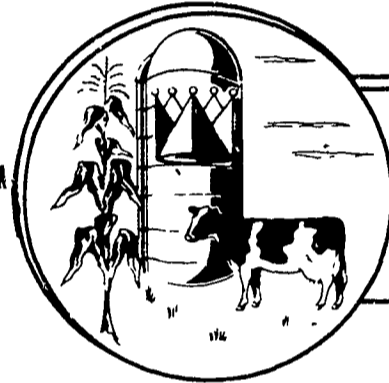
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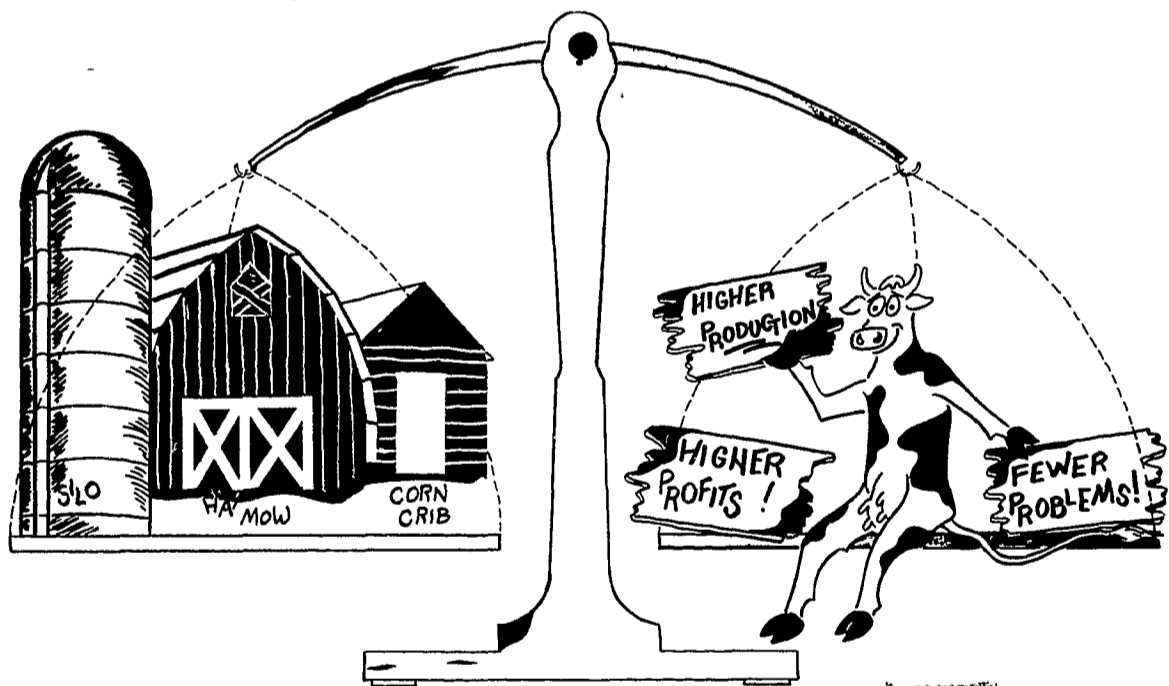
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