

Dairy industry

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strikes here in the East. The situation has left Inter-State with a problem, but one that is being answered Hand assured the dairymen.

"The strike now will have a slight impact on earnings, but won't create a loss," Hand exclaimed. Inter-State allocates funds for unexpected marketing costs, such as the movement of milk out of the immediate area. Lancaster Farming contacted the cooperative's headquarters earlier this month in regards to the energy crisis which had producers, haulers and processors in an even worse bind. "We're experiencing larger than normal marketing costs," general manager Dr. James Honan reported. Throughout the energy crisis and now during this critical strike situation, the cooperative has not had to dump a drop of milk, an IMPCO spokesman said.

But the pressures are on in more ways than one. A direct effect of the long hauls to Ohio and western parts of the state is that trucks are not as readily available for on-the-farm pick-ups. Equipment is tied up for longer periods of time, both on the roads and at plants.

The latter is a special concern to dairymen and IMPCO management who take note of milk plants closing their doors. Last week, for example, the Koontz Creamery in Baltimore went out of business. This has forced producers' milk to other dairies. Storage facilities at the processing plants are limited, yet new supplies of milk are arriving daily. On top of that, milk production is significantly higher than it was a year ago and the trend has numerous top officials a bit nervous.

On the other side of the spectrum are regulations which require milk to be sold by a certain date. Caught between the dated cartons and the limited storage space is record-high production. The dairyman is faced with a two-pronged problem.

"The balancing of milk supplies is becoming more and more difficult," Hand emphasized, leading into a brief report on the cooperative's plans to build its own manufacturing plant near Mount Holly Springs in Cumberland County. IMPCO's and private studies have shown that such a move would be productive. Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Kent Shelhamer, however, has expressed doubts over the matter, claiming he is interested in knowing what impact the proposed facility would have on Pennsylvania's dairy industry as a whole. He has asked Penn State University to conduct a study.

While that may be an issue which basically concerns only members of Inter-State, other marketing developments take on a regional, national and even global scope.

As an indication of the serious problems facing dairymen now, Lancaster Farming has received word from James C. Behney, president of the Adams County Farmers

Association. The message: "An urgent meeting for all Adams County dairymen has been called for Monday evening, March 14, at 8 p.m. at the West Street Branch of the Gettysburg Bank in Gettysburg. A spokesman from the Pennsylvania Farmers Association will be there to discuss the dairy situation and its present problems.

Milk production last year was the highest since 1965, according to USDA figures released on March 4. A gain for 1977 is already underway, and herein lies the reason for concern. Production is outstripping demands.

The dairy situation on a world-wide basis looks like this, according to USDA:

"World milk production was record high last year, despite decreased output in the USSR, the long-time leading producer. Output was up two per cent from a year ago, 2½ per cent above 1974, and nine per cent above the 1968-72 average." Total production was pegged at 390 million tons last year, and for 1977 world production is expected to hit 397 million tons.

IMPCO economists have taken a wait and see attitude toward the future, especially in view of the fact that support prices for milk are due to be revised on April 1. In addressing himself to that topic, Hand noted that USDA Secretary Bob Bergland has given consumer groups additional weight in the decision making process. Considerable speculation has therefore been aroused as to how Bergland will guide the agriculture department. Consumer interests are reportedly balking at moves which would maintain an 80 per cent parity level for milk. Some farm organizations would like to have the support price moved to 85 per cent of parity or higher. Dairy industry leaders in this region, however, are hoping that milk prices will not go up significantly since high prices at a time of high production may be difficult to get past the consumer. A real problem situation could develop, industry spokesmen say, including Agriculture Secretary Shelhamer.

Hand did speculate on the dairy industry future in saying that the trend to fewer and fewer plants is likely to continue. It amounts to less handling space and less flexibility, he noted. That's why IMPCO and Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers of Baltimore would like to go ahead with plans for the manufacturing plant at Mount Holly Springs. According to Hand, no formal contract to begin construction had been signed as of Thursday.

The economic conditions throughout Inter-State's 60 years of existence have caused the cooperative to take on different challenges, Hand indicated. The cooperative itself has changed, following a trend which is true of the entire dairy industry. Whereas milk was at one time delivered door-to-door, it's now being handled primarily through supermarket chains. As their suppliers, IMPCO and other cooperatives have a big stake in these marketing



Dr. Paul Hand

channels. The developments over the years have caused Inter-State to change with its programs and scope, Hand

said. Emphasis, however, has continuously been on integrity, honesty, service, and membership relations, IMPCO members pointed out.

Loyalty of members was singled out as being one of the keys to success of a cooperative, and four District 5 members were called forward to be recognized for their years with Inter-State. Receiving a 50-year membership award was John Breneman and his son, Arthur. The father and son team has been working with an Inter-State affiliated dairy business since 1917, it was pointed out. The 50-year plaque was 10 years late in coming, but the elder

Breneman joked it didn't much matter since he was only two years old in 1917. He could remember selling milk for \$1 per hundredweight. The 25-year membership recognition went to Clyde and Harvey Heller. In concluding business of

the District 5 membership meeting, the following officers and delegates were chosen: In the Witmer local, Harvey Heller and Mervin

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PUBLIC AUCTION

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SATURDAY, MARCH 26,

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NOTE: Machinery in good condition - Not many small articles selling.

Approx. 1200 bales mixed hay —
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Approx. 20 tons ear corn

Terms: Cash - Not Responsible for Accidents
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