

## Rules proposed for beef referendum

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In related actions last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced its decision to issue an order that would authorize a nationally coordinated research and information program for beef, and proposed rules for conducting a referendum on a Beef Research and Information Order. Registration may begin by June 13. Comments on the proposal should be sent to USDA no later than April 30.

According to USDA's

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the order would authorize a beef research and information program administered by a beef board of not more than 68 beef producers selected by the secretary of agriculture from nominations submitted by producer organizations. Each state or geographic area would have representation on the board proportional to its cattle production.

The beef board could initiate a broad spectrum of

projects to improve beef production, distribution, and marketing and to insure that an adequate, steady supply of beef is available to consumers. Such a program could include consumer education and information and research on a wide variety of subjects such as health and nutrition, new product development, and improving production efficiency.

During the first three years of operation, the beef board could collect assessments of up to three-tenths of one percent of the value of all cattle sold. After that, under the Beef Research and Information Act, the rate of assessment could be changed but could not exceed five-tenths of one percent. Producers not wishing to participate in the program could have their assessment refunded.

Under the act, before an order could go into effect, eligible producers must vote on it in a nationwide referendum conducted by USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). Producers must register to vote in a referendum. For approval of an order, at least

50 per cent of those registered must vote, and two-thirds of them must favor the order.

According to the referendum rules proposed, eligible producers would have two weeks to register to vote at their local ASCS office. Then, because the act requires that registration be completed ten days prior to voting, there would be a two week interim followed by a two week voting period. The proposal does not specify dates for these steps, but USDA officials anticipate that registration could begin about June 13.

The proposed referendum rules, which would apply also to any other future referendum on this program, were published in the April 15 Federal Register. Copies are available from Program Operations Division, ASCS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013. Interested persons can comment on the proposal until April 30. Send five copies of written comments to: Hearing Clerk, Room 1077-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250.

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## Non-fat dry milk favored for feed

WASHINGTON, D.C. - John W. Scott, master of the National Grange, the nation's oldest and second-largest farm organization, recently recommended that the surplus non-fat dry milk (NFDM) that the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) has in storage should be placed up for bids for use in high protein feed supplements that are used in the livestock and dairy industries.

dairy products by using a less expensive source of protein. Second, it would lessen the demand for soybean products, decreasing the demand for export controls on soybeans. Thirdly, it would reduce the cost to the government of the dairy price support programs by utilizing a product now in surplus in government storage," Scott concluded.


The Grange leader said that NFDM is not as efficient a source of protein for livestock feed rations as soybean meal but that this is a program that should be looked into for a short-run emergency livestock feeding program. He said that the Grange is not suggesting it as a permanent program and would not support such a move, but if it would forestall export embargoes on soybeans, we think it has merit.

In a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland, the national farm leader said, "We have over 432 million pounds of NFDM in CCC in storage and this wholesome dairy product contains from 27 per cent to 32 per cent protein. On the other hand, the primary source of protein supplement in dairy and livestock feed rations is supplied from soybean meal. This product is both expensive and, due to increased exports, is and will be in short supply. It is estimated that before the next soybean crop year, which in itself is still much in doubt, we will have only 65 million bushels of beans on hand."

The use of non-fat dry milk will have a beneficial effect on the entire nation, Scott told the Secretary. "First, it should reduce the cost of producing meat and

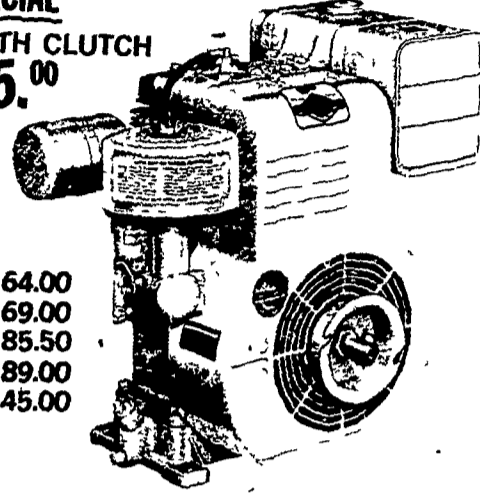
### Holland gets corn

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Department of Agriculture has been authorized by private U.S. exporters to make public the information that new export sales contracts have been entered into for 50,800 metric tons of corn for export to the Netherlands during the 1976-77 marketing year (ending September 1977) and 76,200 metric tons during the 1977-78 marketing year (ending September 1978).



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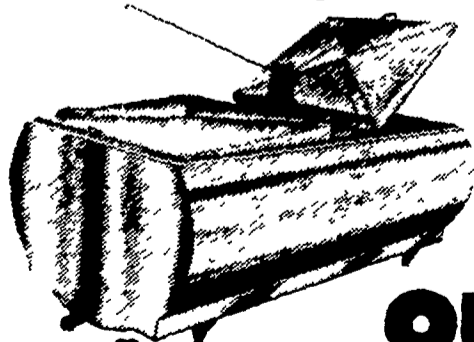
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