

Eastern fights writer's accusations

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative President Arden Tewksbury announced Wednesday that Eastern's management had been authorized to "fight back" against erroneous and misleading news articles. Tewksbury said "over the past six months there have been nearly a dozen news articles in area newspapers and farm magazines discrediting the management and officers of the cooperative. All of these articles have been written by or instigated by one person."

"Up until now," Tewksbury said, "we have taken it on the chin and tried to keep our members informed directly of the true facts." The most recent attack by the same writer was carried in "The Farm Journal," a national publication, and according to Tewksbury, was by far the most damaging. "The time has come for Eastern to take action against this type of irresponsible activity," he said.



Arden Tewksbury

specify what type of action is contemplated, it was reported that in addition to Howard McDonald, Eastern's general manager there were also two members of the cooperative's law firm present at the meeting where the action was authorized.

Much of the writer's thrust has been in opposition to a program Eastern has worked out with Leprino Foods of Denver calling for the construction by the cooperative of two large cheese plants to be operated by Leprino. McDonald explained that Eastern would supply milk for the cheese

plants and would collect monthly lease payments covering the cost of financing, depreciation and investment on asset value.

Such payments would, over a period of 20 years, net Eastern about \$8 million above actual costs. Eastern would also own the facilities with a value of \$12 million to \$15 million free and clear at the end of the 20 years. "This is a far cry from the comment in the Farm Journal that Eastern was investing \$15 million in the hopes of breaking even," McDonald said.

Most dairy experts agree that the Italian cheese

market is the fastest growing of any dairy product markets and the Eastern-Leprino arrangement makes a lot of sense, Tewksbury claims. The first plant has been in production since last November and handled large volumes of excess milk during the recent New York City milk strike. "This is one reason," McDoanld said "that Eastern came through the strike in good shape while other co-ops had special deductions of over 40 cents per hundredweight."

The second plant at Waverly, N.Y. was also used during the milk strike to

handle excess milk for other handlers through the powder drying portion of the plant. According to McDonald, the Waverly plant will be in cheese production within the next 10 days in time to handle efficiently the heaviest part of the flush production period.

Tewksbury said that while there were a large number of half-truths and untruths in the Farm Journal article, he would not try to answer them publicly. "We will be sending a special letter to our members fully explaining each of the allegations point by point," he said.

Hallowell urges care in buying bulk meats

HARRISBURG - State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell is urging consumers to be careful when making purchases of bulk or hanging beef, to avoid overcharging.

Hallowell said, "Most of our bulk meat dealers are reputable and abide by the law, but a few have been

utilizing deceptive practices which dupe the consumer into buying more than they had planned and paying more than they had expected.

"As an example, our Bureau of Standard Weights and Measures has investigated complaints where the customer has paid up to

\$2.99 per pound hanging weight, before cutting or trimming takes place. With a standard 25 per cent weight loss through cutting, the actual cost to the consumer for meat taken home could be as much as \$3.99 per pound. And that figure would include not only steaks, but also ground beef and soup

bones as well." In some places in the state, choice western beef can be purchased cut, wrapped and flash frozen for as little as \$1.29 per pound.

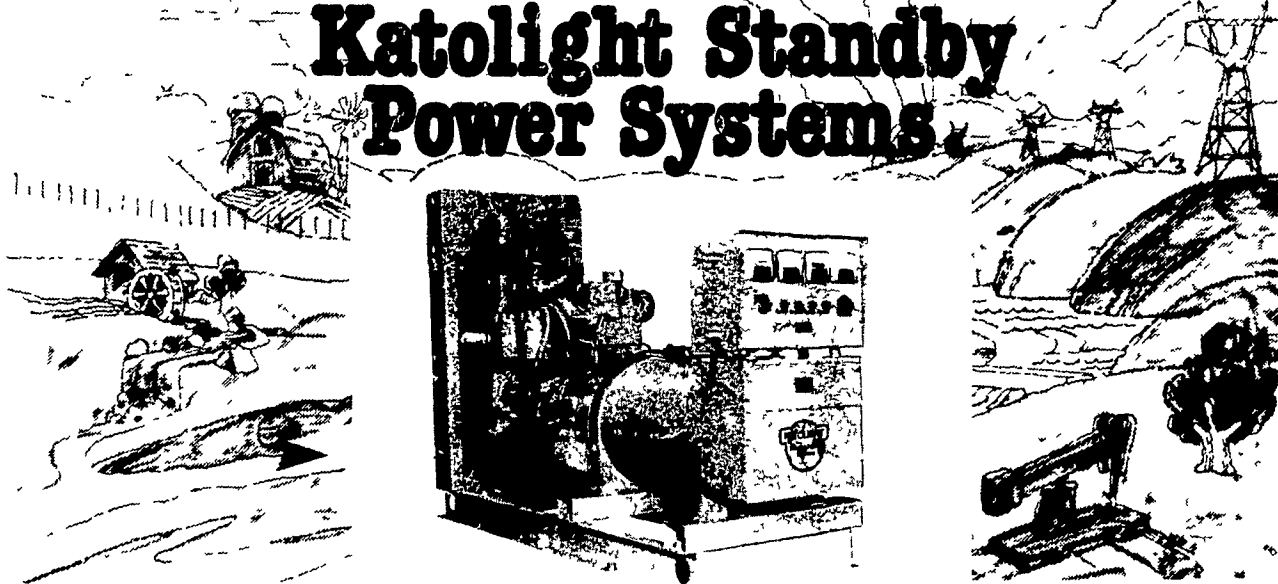
Hallowell said that knowledge on the "buying basics and the seller's responsibilities" will be helpful to the prospective customer of bulk meats.

Pennsylvania's Title 70 places several requirements on the sales of bulk meats, aimed at protecting both the consumer and the legitimate seller. "Only correct terms and definitions may be used to describe the meat. The seller must clearly explain hanging weight, cutting loss and approximate yield. And

The sales ticket should include the name and address of the seller, the date, name and address of the purchaser, a complete description of the product (quality, grade, etc.), the price per pound, hanging weight, the net weight after cutting, the total number of packages, the contents of each package and the total weight of each cut.

Hallowell said that consumers who suspect violations of this act should contact one of the Department's seven regional offices or the Bureau of Standard Weights and Measures, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pa. 17120.

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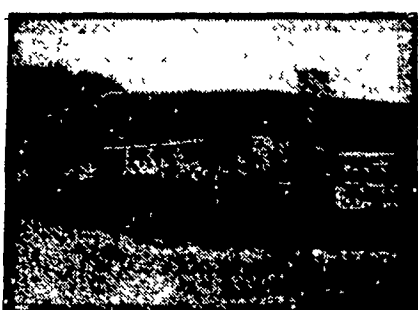
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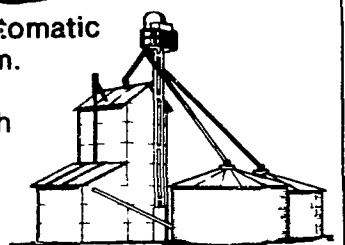
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