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Despite financial losses, bad publicity and a class action suit . . .

Eastern claims to be on the rebound

By DIETER KRIEG

BIRD-IN-HAND — Two top officers of Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative told a group of district officers Wednesday night that their dairy organization is making definite progress in licking its financial woes. It was noted that marketing costs for March of this year were less than a sixth of what they were for March of 1978 and that the cooperative is now at the point where a dedicated membership can work for continued solidarity and financial stability. Arden Tewksbury, president of Eastern, commented that the turmoil experienced by Eastern in the past year is causing the membership to "tighten" and work more coherently.

Also addressing the assembly of some 50 people was Franklin Wagner, secretary of the Syracuse, N.Y.-based milk marketing organization. Wagner is a dairy farmer from near Hershey, Dauphin County.

Wagner and Tewksbury both gave encouraging and spirited reports, while at the same time acknowledging



Franklin Wagner



Arden Tewksbury

that Eastern has had, and continues to have financial and publicity problems. "We were in a weak marketing position, and we haven't always been successful, but overall, Eastern has a record of success," said Wagner. Commenting on the membership, he declared "it is extremely important that we maintain our membership level and get more members."

Tewksbury's and Wagner's comments were primarily directed at three problems, all of them related. They were: Eastern's association with the Leprino Cheese Company, and its new milk handling plants at Horse Heads and Waverly; negative publicity that has appeared about Eastern's management and financial dealings; and a pending class action suit against present and former directors.

Wagner and Tewksbury assured the group that the charges placed against Eastern are unfounded and the

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Hog outlook mixed, farmers hopeful

By KENDACE BORRY

LITITZ — In February of 1979, slaughter hog prices hit a record high price of 58.50 in the Lancaster County markets, but since then, area hog producers relate, the price has been steadily dropping, to the point where this week at the Wednesday market sale at the Lancaster Stockyards slaughter hogs were reported slow, opening 50 cents lower, and U.S. No. 1 to 2, weighing 200 to 240 pounds, sold for \$43.00 to \$43.50 per hundredweight.

According to H. Louis Moore, livestock marketing specialist for Penn State, hog producers were favored with good returns in recent years because of the relatively tight supplies of pork. He noted that hog prices at

leading markets averaged \$41.30 in 1977, and \$48.46 in 1978.

Mainly due to these high prices, Moore reasoned in a recent livestock marketing information newsletter, farmers have been doing major expansion in the hog industry. He notes that farrowings in the December 1978 to February 1979 were up 16 per cent and farrowings in the March to May period are expected to be up about 24 per cent.

This, he reasons, could easily result in an 18 per cent increase in pork production in the last half of 1979. It is possible, he states, that hog marketings in the fourth quarter of this year will be the largest since the fourth quarter of 1970.

Area producers are watching the prices of

hogs, but they do not seem to be too concerned yet.

Abe Fisher, Kinzer R1, noted that the expansion that was started last Summer and Fall is still continuing.

"It takes a year to really get going," he explained. "Now those houses which were planned last year are getting started. And it's going to be tough to get going at market prices of 42 and 43 cents. The breakeven selling price for hogs is between 38 and 43 cents per pound."

"But we look forward to prices edging up during the Summer," he continued. "Traditionally prices rise in June and July as there are less pigs around."

"Now if they don't rise, and we start the

Fall slide, and prices will drop in the Fall, that means that prices will drop that much more. If the present hog situation continues throughout the Summer as it is, the price may even go lower than 38 cents."

"Thus means that the guys in the hog finishing business are finally losing money," he stated. "Those who purchased feeder pigs at \$1.20 to 1.30 per pound are losing money."

"But there still is a great demand for feeder pigs. The increased number of finishing units that were put up allows a greater demand than the market calls for. This has been the situation for the last month."

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Hallowell gives clean bill of health

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell last week announced that tests conducted on feed, grass and water samples, as well as additional blood and milk sample tests on the Lancaster County farm of Clair Hoover have found no evidence that radioactivity caused the sickness and deaths of cattle on the farm.

Hallowell also said that a survey of most farms within

a five-mile radius and other large dairy farms outside the five-mile radius of the Three Mile Island nuclear facility had shown no other patterns of unexpected deaths or illnesses of livestock.

"Our tests show that the health problems among the cattle on Clair Hoover's farm seem to be unrelated to radioactive emissions from the Three Mile Island facility," said Hallowell. "In

addition, other farmers in the area have not reported any similar unusual death rates in their herds."

Hallowell said that results of analysis of raw milk, water and grasses sampled at the Hoover farm all showed no detectable levels of radiation. Blood tests on approximately 25 samples from cows and heifers on the Hoover farm were checked and showed no evidence of anemia. The blood samples

from cows on the farm were negative for leptospirosis, a disease sometimes responsible for jaundice. In addition, a blood study showed no abnormal cell types or any depression in the numbers of thrombocytes. Blood tests on two other cows have been checked for leukemia and are negative.

Hallowell said that last week's, survey results had been compiled for 92 farms

with 7,900 dairy cattle, 1,100 beef cattle, 475 swine, 100 sheep, 70 horses and 18 goats.

Hallowell said a survey of veterinarians who practice large animal medicine in the 10-mile zone is almost complete. Initial reports from five of the seven veterinarians indicate that their farmers have not had any inexplicable medical problems in their herds.

Hallowell said the autopsy

on one cow brought into the agricultural department's laboratory at Summerdale from Clair Hoover's Bainbridge dairy farm showed that the animal died as a result of an infection of the uterine tract and complications related to the strain of calving. Hallowell said if any other cattle die, their carcasses would be subjected to a similar

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The farm equipment sales outlook has improved, according to dealers from all over the United States who met last week in Hershey. Page 107 has details.

Five girls are competing for the title of Lancaster County Dairy Princess. You can meet them by way of an article appearing on page 116.

The production of alcohol for fuel will not take away food and feed, says Iowa's Congressman Berkley Bedell.

In this issue

the prime sponsor of a bill which would get the country moving with gasoline. Page 126 has details.

One of the young agricultural leaders in any part of the country is the county FFA president. Kendace Borry Allen introduces one of them on page 50.

The tax on farm machinery in Maryland will be removed. Details are on page 60.

Cesar Chavez has some clout with the farm workers in California, but one of them isn't holding still for what Chavez is trying to get out of him. Find out what's happening on page 131.

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