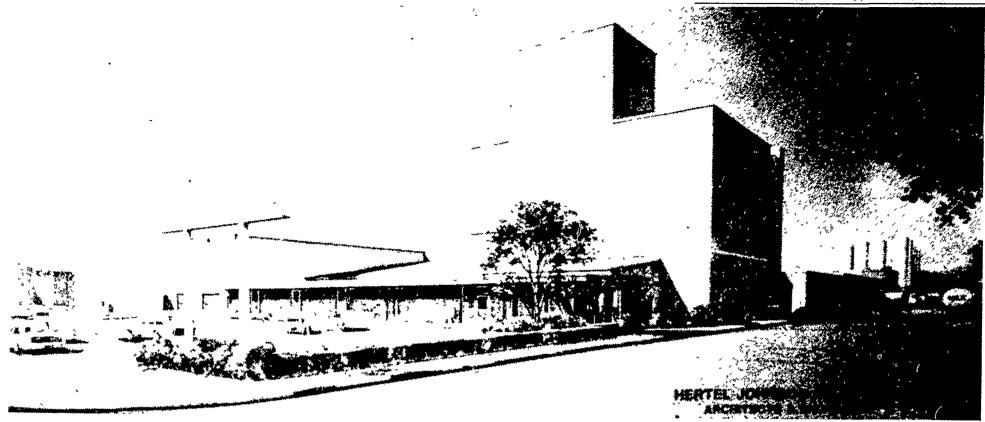
Lancaster Farming, Saturday, June 30, 1979-105



This is an architect's sketch of what the Waverly dairy plant will look like when fully completed. It is to be the largest mozzarella cheese plant in the United States. Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative has a 20-year contract to provide the milk for it.

Eastern smiles when it says 'cheese'

By DIETER KRIEG

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The chaos and complexity of milk marketing in 1977-78 still has some dairy cooperatives licking their wounds. Eastern Cooperative Milk Producers, headquartered here, is among them.

They've been knocked about by burdensome surpluses, handlers' bankruptcies, closed doors, bad debts, insufficient operating funds, and internal turmoil. The list could go on. What's more, their problems are far from over. The management admits that, but they're also hopeful for improvement.

Some knowledgeable observers of the

industry doubt that Eastern can overcome its problems. But don't tell that to the top brass of the 4500-member dairy farmers' organization. While admitting that they've suffered some stunning blows, and that a lack of foresight on their part was responsible for some of their defeats, the official bottom line from Syracuse is of a positive nature.

Much, if not all of the official optimism displayed by Eastern's management can be traced down to one word: "mozzarella".

Mozzarella 1s an Italian cheese manufactured on a huge scale by the Leprino Cheese Company. Eastern 1s under contract with Leprino to supply milk to the cheese industry giant for a 20-year period. The dairy cooperative's management, directors, and a majority of the remaining membership look at this association as a means to not only solve problems, but to also provide a bright future.

The idea has sparked considerable controversy and misunderstanding. The issue itself, and subsequent reports about the deal in some trade journals have contributed to a substantial reduction in membership. Eastern's director of member and public relations, Lisle Dutton, says the membership now stands at 4500. By comparison, the cooperatrive's news releases of a year ago claimed a roster of 7000 members.

According to Eastern's president, Arden Tewksbury, a dairy farmer from Meshoppen, Wyoming County, Pa., the depleted membership leaves the cooperative with a dedicated, solid core from which positive support can be expected.

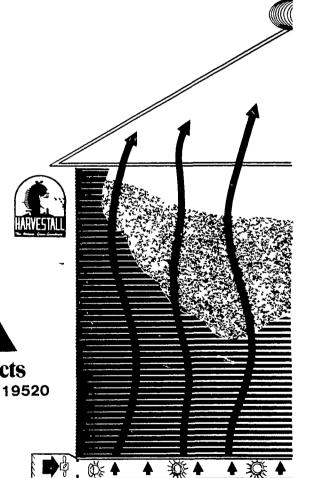
Tewksbury, among others at Eastern's headquarters, acknowledges the sharp criticism that has been directed towards the wounded cooperative. He says he is

(Turn to Page 107)



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