

# The Milk Check

**TOM JURCHAK**  
County Agent



**All's Well That -**  
The Minnesota-Wisconsin price ended the year with a record high \$11.85 for average test milk. When converted to 3.5 test it also gave you a record high Basic Formula Price of \$11.34 beating September by a scant two cents. But that wasn't the end. It also gives you a record high Class II price of \$11.40 for December and a record high butterfat differential of 15 cents. The only record you didn't break this month was the Class I price. For that you'll have to wait until February when it goes to \$13.59 in Order 2. That's because the Class I price is calculated two months ahead from the Basic Formula Price. This was \$11.34 for December so, adding your \$2.25 Class I differential, you get \$13.59 the Class I price for February which will be

the first record broken in 1980 and perhaps the last one before next Spring when the support price is adjusted on April 1. Getting back to December, you can thank two more records made this month for these price increases. A butter price of \$1.3016 and a powder price of .8387 cents just barely edged up into the "record" category by fractions of a cent but enough to do the job. All of these prices were just pennies over previous records but I thought it would be a nice way to cheer you up with the thought for 1979 that all's well that ends well. However, you still have a blend price to get on your December's milk but it won't be a record. That one you made back in October with \$12.64 that was helped by a Louisville Plan payment of 44 cents.

Your class prices in December will be higher than October (16 cents on Class I and 9 cents on Class II) but without a Louisville Plan payment in December you won't make it. However, it's good to know that the market ended the year on a fairly strong note in spite of the warning signs of trouble ahead for next year.

**About Face**  
The administration's bill for a security fund for dairymen surprisingly resembles the one proposed by the milk marketing cooperatives and backed by the Pennsylvania Farmers Association. Surprising, because it's nearly the same thing that "couldn't be done" before the PFA annual meeting. Sure, it has some differences like a voluntary fund for co-ops if ten per cent of the members request a referendum and a majority of the members favor it or the delegates ask for it. Other changes are a 90 per cent paycheck instead of 100 per cent and a one cent per hundred payment. But it's still a plan wholly funded by dealers that they said would never pass in the legislature. Yet to be heard from at this writing is the dairy committee of the State Grange. All they need is a "right, face" to fall in line because

## Strengthen supports during embargo, firm asks

**DEKALB, IL.** — The head of one of the nation's leading agricultural firms Thursday called on President Carter and Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland to take immediate action to cushion the economic setback the Soviet grain embargo is causing American Farmers. In a telegrammed message, T.H. Roberts Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of DeKalb AgResearch, Inc., requested Carter and Bergland to instruct the Commodity Credit Corporation to purchase corn and wheat on the open market at the average farm prices of January 4, 1980, the day the embargo was enacted.

their plan is a fund financed equally by producers and handlers. There is still a lot of "dressing up" to do in the ranks before going to battle when the Legislature returns on January 21, but it appears that this time, at last, the troops may get out of the trenches to see what the enemy looks like.

On that date, corn was selling at \$2.40 per bushel and wheat at \$3.90 per bushel. Roberts pointed out that a similar situation in 1971 showed that only relatively small amounts of grain would have to be purchased to achieve this price objective and prices would quickly return to their January 4 levels. As an alternative to that proposal, Roberts suggested the 1979 crop loan levels be increased to \$2.40 for corn and \$3.90 for wheat. "The price improvement resulting from this approach would benefit all farmers whether they participated in the program or not," he said. Roberts further urged Carter and Bergland to announce immediately a 1980 paid diversion program for corn and wheat. "Although this action is contrary to the near-term self interest of the seed business," he said, "it is in the best interest of farmers. Therefore we support it." "The President's embargo was made in sincere conviction that it's in our

national interest. We strongly believe, therefore, that its costs must be shared by the entire nation, not primarily by farmers, who so far have carried most of the load in the form of grain price decline," Roberts said in his statement. Roberts sent the telegram to Washington in reaction to government programs announced through January 9, which he termed inadequate. "Farmers face lower prices this year unless the federal government takes stronger steps than it has so far to correct the price decline caused by President Carter's decision," Roberts said, adding, "The Russians may respond to the embargo by cutting back their livestock herds as they did in 1976 after a bad crop in 1975. This will reduce grain demand for more than just this year, should Soviet-American relations return to normal." Roberts said all of the actions he is suggesting the government take are within the present authority of the Secretary of Agriculture.

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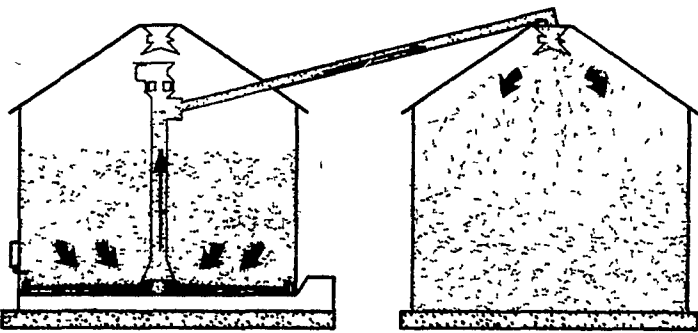
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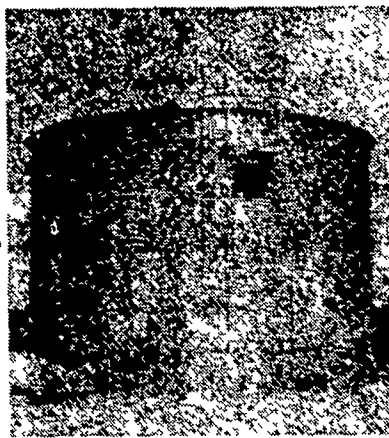
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