

## The Milk Check

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County Agent



### What's Wrong

Just in case it's not clear to everyone, reconstituted milk is made simply by adding water to powdered non-fat milk. Anyone can make it by buying the powder at any supermarket and mixing it at home.

This alone shoots one of CNI's arguments that Federal Orders "eliminate from commerce an equally nutritious but lower cost alternative to fluid milk."

In fact it's probably cheaper for the consumer to mix it in the kitchen than to have some processor do it and deliver all that water.

How much of a savings is there? Right now in my town I can make reconstituted milk for \$1.35 a gallon and fluid skim milk sells for \$1.74 a gallon. That's a difference of 39 cents a gallon.

The problem is that most people don't like reconstituted skim so they mix it with whole milk. This is probably what would happen if CNI proposals were approved and processors were making it.

If I make a 50-50 blend of skim powder and whole milk at my prices, it will cost me \$1.58 a gallon. That's only a 16 cent saving over fluid skim and I provide all the labor, transportation and water.

Estimates of what it would be if the processor made it range from five to eight cents a gallon. Not much. Even less if it isn't all passed through to the consumer.

Check the prices in your market.

### Dollars and Sense

The big problem with the CNI proposals is the savings in pennies for consumers compared to the losses in dollars for dairy farmers.

This will vary in different regions of the country and under different Federal Orders. But, here in the northeastern U. S. you will be hit among the hardest.

That's not hard to understand with reconstituted milk cutting into your Class I markets that you depend on so much for your income.

Estimates made back in 1976 indicate a drop in the blend price of 42 cents a hundred. This would produce a drop of 278 million pounds in production and \$201 million in income. Translated to an average New York state dairy farmer by Dr. Andrew Novakovic at Cornell this would mean a loss of \$2,242 per farm in 1976.

Assuming this farmer was an Order 2 producer and knowing the Order 2 blend has increased 21 per cent in three years the average loss would now be \$2,713 per farm.

It doesn't make sense that farmers should suffer losses of thousands of dollars to provide savings of pennies for consumers. If that doesn't get you to write I guess I'm wrong.

### New Year - Old Prices

I was hoping that the prices for the new year

## Broiler placements up another 14%

**HARRISBURG** — Placements of broiler chicks in the commonwealth for the week ending February 2 were 2,382,000, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

The placements were 14 percent above the corresponding week a year earlier and four percent above the

previous week. Average placements during the past nine weeks were five percent above a year earlier.

Placements in the 21 key poultry producing states were 79,622,000, one percent above the previous week and seven percent above the week a year earlier. Average placements during the past nine weeks were five percent above the same week a year ago.

Broiler-fryers slaughtered in Pennsylvania under federal inspection during the week ending January 23 totaled 1,789,000, with an average live-weight of 4.14 pounds.

### Clothes, Too!

"You have no complaint," a city man said to a farmer, "you have your own milk, butter, eggs, meat and vegetables. With enough to eat and a place to sleep, what else do you want?"

"Well," said the farmer, "you come around a few months from now and you'll see the fattest, sleekest, nakedest farmer you ever saw."

would have some good news for you, but they look the same as last year.

The January Minnesota-Wisconsin price for 3.5 test milk increased only three cents over December to \$11.37. That makes your Class II price for January \$11.40 - the same as December - and Class I at \$13.52 only two cents better.

The reason, of course, is that the product prices haven't changed much with butter at \$1.30, powder at .837 and cheese at \$1.25. Even your butterfat differential will be the same, at .15 cents in January.

All of these are really down to the support price levels and can't go lower. They won't go higher as long as your milk production keeps increasing over last year.

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