

The Milk Check

TOM JURCHAK
County Agent



Carbon Copy
You should have guessed when the Minnesota-Wisconsin price for January was nearly the same as December that your milk check would also be a carbon copy of last month but you might not have guessed the uniform or blend price would be exactly the same.

That's what it was, \$12.25 for December and also for January. With Class prices almost the same both months and a 35 million pound increase in production in January, you were lucky it wasn't lower.

Class I sales picked up 10 million pounds this month, but your increased production gave you a Class I utilization of only 47.1 percent compared to 47.8 in December. This was the highest monthly production since last June, and another four percent jump over last month.

It's just a good thing that nationally milk production is not increasing as rapidly as it is in Order 2 or we would all be swimming in milk - or powder.

The problem is - if you are making money at these prices you will probably continue to increase production and there's no way to get off the roller

coaster by slowing it down. You have to wait until it crashes.

But this is about the pace you can expect through the first half of this year, unfortunately, with the increase in the support price on April 1 the only bright spot in the foreseeable future. If things go as expected, you may even get a carbon copy of this newsletter next month unless some unexpected changes occur.

My bet is that nothing different will happen and you'll be sitting on your support prices until April and maybe October.

Beef referendum
Registrations were somewhat disappointing for the national referendum on Beef Research and Information Order with less than 10,000 farmers signing up in Pennsylvania with over 15,000 dairy herds plus the beef herds.

In the northeast corner, the four largest dairy counties turned out less than a third of the eligible dairy farmers, plus again the beef producers which would have dropped the percentage even lower.

However, those who registered will have a choice in the outcome because the results depend only on the number registered.

If a 50 percent of the registered farmers vote and a majority of them approve the order, then it will be organized with a 68 member Beef Board composed of beef producers appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. This Board will administer the order; collect the assessments, two tenths of one percent the first two years, and conduct the beef research and information program.

Board members, who serve without pay, would be selected geographically with each area being represented in proportion to its share of the national cattle inventory. Pennsylvania and New York would each have one member and an alternate on the Board appointed for a three year term from nominations submitted by producer organizations.

Any organization representing producers may request certification by USDA to participate in nominating Board members.

Assessment rates may be raised after two years with USDA approval but not to exceed five tenths of one percent. Even at the lower rate it is expected that about \$40 million would be collected annually.

Dairy animals sold for milk production or breeding would be exempt and only those sold for slaughter would be assessed.

The Order may be terminated by a referendum requested by ten percent of

the producers who voted originally if a majority of the voters accounting for more than half of the cattle owned by the voters favors the termination.

Don't Beef

So, there you have it. If you were interested enough to register, I presume you voted. If you didn't register, don't beef, just sit back and wait to see what a quarter or third of the eligible voters decided for you.

Most farm organizations are in favor of an approval in the referendum. Beef producers contribute on the average only two cents toward promotion programs for every \$100 worth of sales. Compare that to dairymen who contribute 42 cents. Even two tenths of one percent or 20 cents for every \$100 would still put them pretty far down on the list among farm product promotion campaigns.

With dairymen producing about 18 per cent of the total beef supply, they will certainly have a stake in the results of the referendum.

Everyone has heard the comment that there's nothing so good for milk prices as good beef prices. If that's still true then increasing demand for beef should indirectly help the dairy business.

More importantly if the Order is approved the beef producers may have enough money to join the cholesterol fight with the egg and milk producers and really make an impact on the consuming public.

In addition, farmers generally will have to get used to the idea that research to improve the marketability of their products will have to be financed by them. Public funds for agricultural research have been nearly cut in half in the last 12 years and what is left will go to improve productivity.

Besides every farmer is

competing with every other farmer for a share of the consumer's purchases and considering the limits of the capacity of the human stomach it can be tough competition. It's even tougher when the opposition spends so much more than you do and makes your product sound more like a

poison than the nutritious food that it is.

There are inherent risks in advertising as well as research but the cost of information that's needed to increase beef consumption may be well worth the price for dairymen if it will also turn the tide in declining fluid milk consumption.



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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1980

10:00 A.M.

At: SKIPPAK FIREHOUSE Rt. 113 (1/4 mi. So. of Rt. 73) Skippack, Pa.

Sale will begin w/Fine Collectibles, Furniture at approx. 12 Noon, remainder of China & Glassware, Gold Coins at 2:30 P.M., Oriental Rugs at 4:00 P.M.

FINE POTTERY includes 14 pcs of Medinger Pottery i.e. 4 water pitchers, creamer, 8 plates; Shpware & Sgraffito, & other valuable pottery.

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