

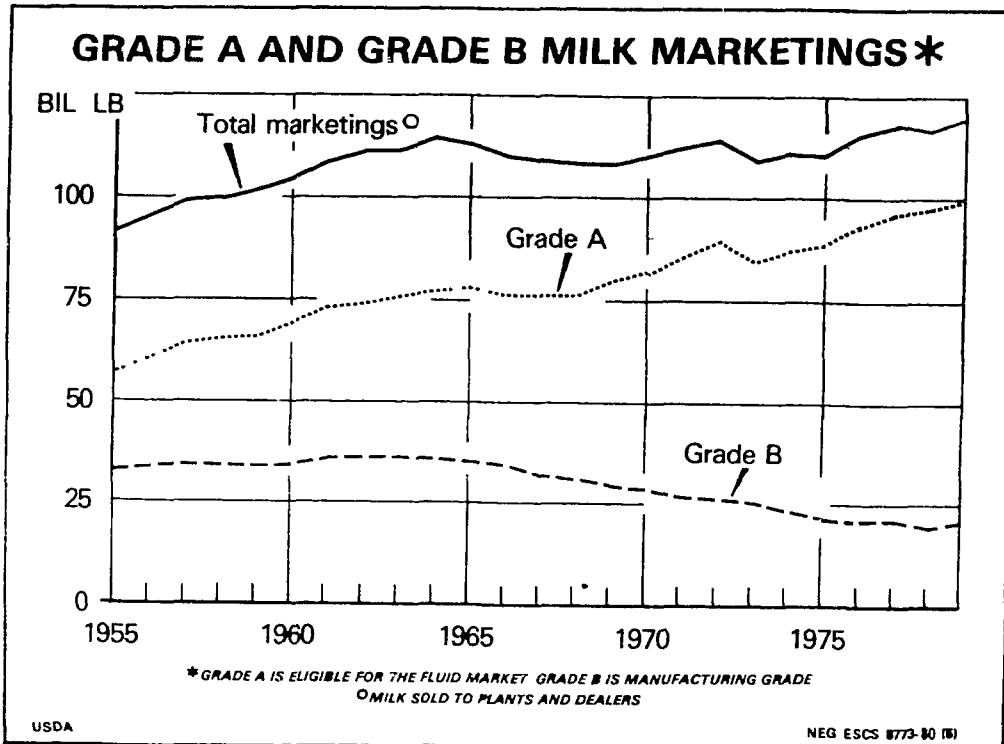
## Milk production continues in upward spiral

WASHINGTON — Milk production for the first four months of 1980, on a daily average basis, was 3 percent greater than during the same period in 1979. Output in April was 3.2 percent larger, the twelfth straight month that production has been up from year-earlier levels.

Recent increases in output over year-earlier levels resulted from relatively large gains in output per cow and little change in milk cow numbers. In fact, April was the ninth consecutive month that year-to-year gains in output per cow exceeded 3 percent. Following 6 straight months of relatively small year-to-year declines, cow numbers were reported above year-ago levels in March and April for the first time since 1954.

The recent increase in milk cow numbers, when a decline is normal, reflect the favorable milk-feed price relations, as well as lower utility cow prices and a large replacement herd. Dairy men have probably lowered their herd culling rates because of good returns over concentrate costs and a relative low salvage value for cows. Given the lower culling rates and a large influx of replacements, the dairy herd has expanded slightly.

The increased output per cow also reflects the quite favorable milk-feed price relationships of the last year. For 1980 the ratio has been running slightly below 1979 but substantially above the 1970-79 average of 1.42. As expected, given the milk-feed ratio, dairy men on April 1 reported feeding 4.5 percent more grain and other concentrates than a year earlier. That increase follows a year-to-year increase of 2.7 percent reported for January 1.



Milk production was up in all five of the major producing States during April. California and New York posted major gains over a year ago of 5.4 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively. Wisconsin had a more modest increase of 2.4 percent, as did Minnesota with 2.1 percent, followed by Pennsylvania with 1.5 percent. Of the 33 reporting States, 12 reported gains in April of 4 percent or more. In addition, 15 States indicated gains of less than 4 percent, leaving only 6 with output equal to or lower than year-earlier levels.

All of the farm production regions reported increased April-to-April milk production. Leading the way was the Mountain region with a 6.3 percent gain, the Pacific region with 5.4 percent, and the Corn Belt up 4.1 percent.

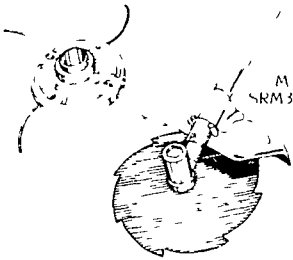
The April milk-feed price ratio stood at a favorable 1.55, about the same as a year earlier and equaling the

1979 average. The ratio has remained constant since both milk prices and feed prices have increased in like

proportions. The average price of 16-percent protein dairy ration on April 15 was (Turn to Page A34)

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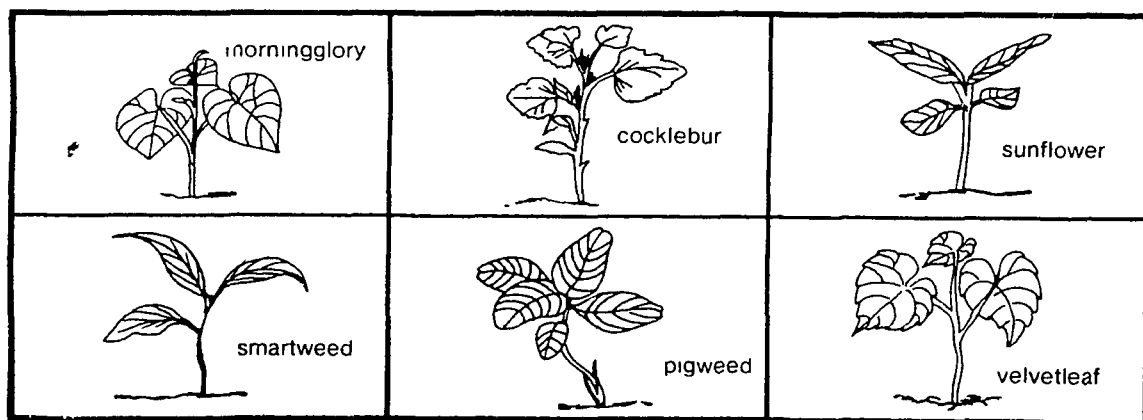
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