

## Independents

(Continued from Page A1)

have to worry about a market for your milk regardless of what happens to fluid sales in the city.

"It is only right and proper that you should strongly consider joining Eastern...we strongly recommend that you join the Cooperative," he concluded.

But the dairymen are not sure they can afford a \$5 stop payment 15 times a month, plus eight cents per hundred, plus dues, plus assessments like those Eastern levied last week.

McDonald confirmed Eastern has an arrangement with Farmland to accept milk produced close to the South Waverly plant from Farmland while Farmland takes Eastern milk produced closer to its dairy. Such agreements are common to avoid shipping expenses, he said.

No one from Farmland was available to comment.

Early this week rumor spread in the farm community that Eastern fieldmen were claiming to have an agreement with local co-ops not to accept milk from the affected shippers. Both NEDCO and Eastern denied any collusion in accepting or rejecting members.

Fenton Murphy, treasurer of NEDCO, said it was simply a matter of everyone being full of milk.

"No way is there an agreement between us," he said.

He said some shippers had called NEDCO co-ops looking for a market, but because of the supply situation they were being turned down.

Eastern's McDonald denied rumors that the Co-op is picking on smaller dairymen, saying the notice will be served down the road.

Nevertheless, farmers in the northern part of the state are running scared. Several said they were worried about not having a market at all—a fear that runs deep for anyone with a perishable commodity.

Nothing is being said by the fieldmen visiting the affected dairymen to ease that fear.

In fact, many of the farmers report the opposite...that they are being told by the Eastern fieldmen that unless they sign up there will be no place else to go.

The message delivered, by implication, the farmers say is "sign up or sell out."

Making matters easier for Eastern is the fact most milk produced in the area goes to its South Waverly plant.

Dairymen say they were told that even should NEDCO agree to allow them to join that Eastern would not let its drivers pick up the milk. And Eastern would levy an additional \$1.95 per hundredweight charge to process the milk.

At least one dairy official outside of Eastern has suggested it would be best for the farmers to wait until the last possible moment to take any action.

Since notice has not been served, he pointed out, the farmers still have at least a month's leeway. And, he said, a lot could happen in that time to open up alternative markets for dairymen hesitant to follow the crowd.

Producers will have to have the backbone to hold off, though, he concluded.

Among positive signs are the passage Wednesday of SB 10 which will allow big milk tankers to travel the roads. One of Farmland's major problems was getting the 80,000 pound tank trucks they felt were economical on state highways.

The Governor is expected to sign the bill into law Tuesday. At present, though, it is just one glimmer of hope.

Other producers said they thought Eastern seemed pretty sure of its getting a loan guarantee from Farmers Home Administration to run the operations at South Waverly.

Should that loan guarantee fall through, they point out, Eastern could find itself flooded with milk producers.

Speculation is that Eastern is waiting for final word on their FmHA request before having the letters sent out.

Even should the Farmland

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Congressman Tom Harkin has asked President Carter to "immediately" reduce interest rates for emergency loans to financially troubled farmers under the Economic Emergency Assistance loan program from 14 per cent to 10 per cent.

In a letter to Carter the Iowan said the loans are supposed to carry an interest rate pegged to the cost of money to the government. The current rate being charged for the loans by the Farmers Home Administration, 14 per cent, is well above the government's cost of money. That cost has been steadily declining since early April and is now just 9.23 per cent as measured by the interest it pays for three

year U.S. Treasury certificates.

Harkin is the author of legislation which extended the EEA loan program an additional two years and authorized an additional \$2 billion in emergency loans under the program. He told Carter Congress never intended the government to make a profit on loans to hard-pressed farmers.

Harkin noted the Administration promptly raised interest rates for the emergency loans when government borrowing costs began to rise in March.

"To be quite frank, Mr. President, I find it very disturbing that the Department of Agriculture would be so quick to increase interest rates and to be so slow in reducing them," Harkin wrote.

Harkin made a similar request last week in a letter to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland. Harkin said he was not taking his request to the

President because conversations he's had with officials at USDA have convinced him "there's no sense of urgency about this at all at USDA."

# Congressman charges FmHA with loan interest gouging

## No-till oats, alfalfa on Schuylkill tour

HEGINS — A tour of no-till oats and alfalfa spring seedings will be held Tuesday, June 24th, 1980 (raindate - June 26th). The tour will begin at 7:00 p.m. at George Rebeck's oat fields on the Kauffman Farm Rt. 25 — one mile east of Hegins — look for signs.

The second stop on the tour will be at Ron Dietz no-till alfalfa seeding on the Schuylkill

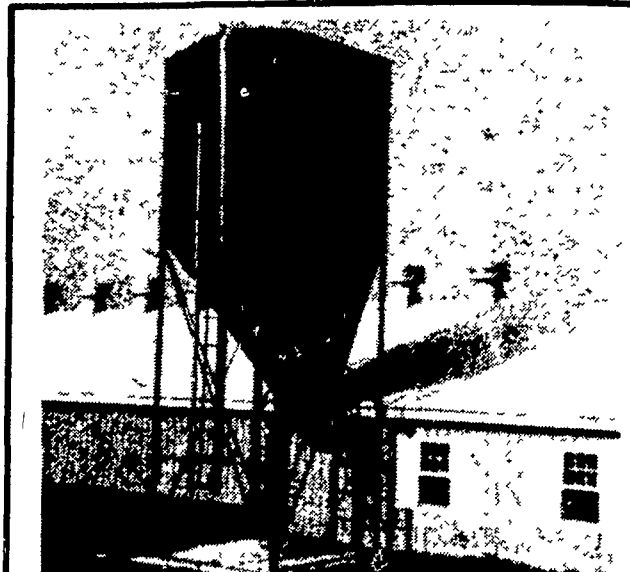
warm farm. The tour will conclude at the Jim Shadle farm for another look at no-till oats and also to view slides of the equipment and methods used in the seeding establishments.

The demonstration plots and the tour are the result of a cooperative effort of the above named farmers, Chevron and FMC chemical companies and the Schuylkill County Extension Service.



shippers join Eastern now it remains likely, some say, that they would bale out at the first opportunity.

"We don't like the way they are doing business," a dairyman's wife concluded



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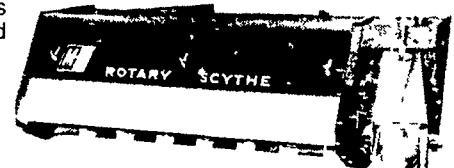
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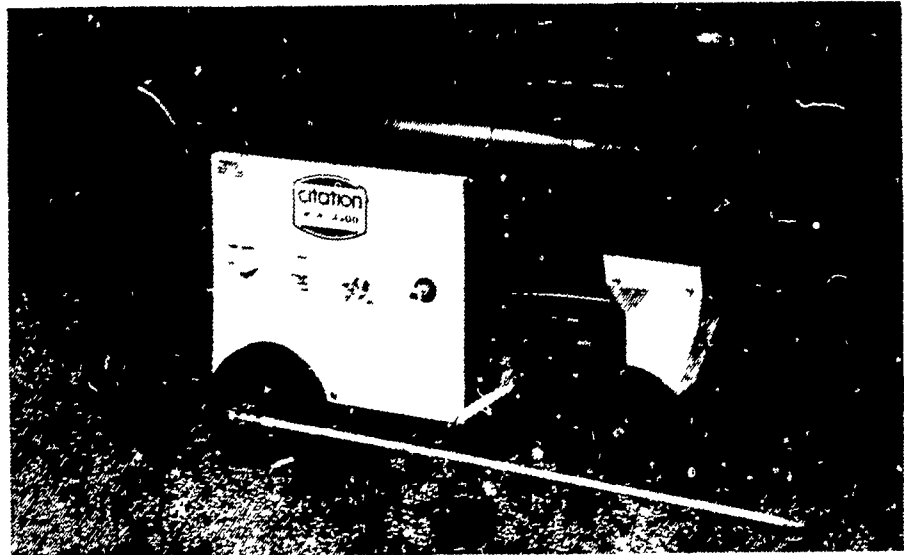
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