

# Milk security clears one hurdle, faces others

**BY CURT HARLER**  
HARRISBURG — Three of four major farm groups involved in pushing for a milk security fund restated their support for the present fund bill as written.

And the House Agriculture Committee, before approving the measure, overwhelmingly defeated a proposal which would have changed the proposed one cent per hundredweight contribution by dealers to two cents.

But the state Association of Milk Dealers Thursday discovered what may be a major oversight in the bill as written. Correcting it will require some revision of the bill.

As written, SB 1287 repeals Section 5 of the Milk Marketing Act. One part of the Section established provisions for sub-dealer bonding. Sub-dealers are those who buy milk from dairies to sell on their own as cheese or butter.

At least 175 sub-dealers are missed in the current

draft, to the tune of \$105,000 in bond revenue.

Meantime, a legislative memorandum signed by Leonard Zemaitis, Pennsylvania Farmers' Union; Charles Wismer, Master of the State Grange; and Charles Ord, representing the six co-ops in the Dairy Cooperative Coalition, was delivered to the House. It calls for speedy passage of SB 1287, the milk security fund bill, as written.

Their move came as Pennsylvania Farmers' Association representatives continued to press for a two cent per hundredweight checkoff.

"Significant modification of this bill will jeopardize passage of the bill," the memorandum to House members said.

It also said those who want and need the security bill would be disturbed if in-fighting in the farm community spelled the death of the bill in the legislature.

The House Agriculture Committee Friday gave SB

1287 the same speedy treatment accorded the measure in the Senate.

The House Ag Committee defeated by a vote of 13 to 2 a proposed amendment to raise the checkoff to two cents.

Only technical amendments to the bill were permitted.

Even those minor adjustments, let alone changes to include sub-dealer bonding, may cause trouble later on. Any amendment must be approved by the Senate which already gave

SB 1287 its overwhelming support

Supporters of SB 1287 say they fear the battle over the fund may be resumed in the Senate where legislators may be urged to vote non-concurrence with any modifications made in the House.

Last ditch opposition from those opposed to the idea of dealer contributions also could come in the Senate. It could come from the two cent group if they don't get their way in the House, but is also likely from the state

milk dealers if the sub-dealer provision is not replaced or if the funding is raised by the House from a penny to two cents.

It must be remembered the dealers all along have opposed a dealer-funded program, demanding some farmer contribution. The bonding may cost even financially sound dairies like Hershey, Abbott's or Penn Dairy as much as \$50,000 a year.

Given the short time left on the legislative calendar

for passage of bills, such back and forth activity could doom the milk security fund bill to die at the end of the session. Should that be the case the entire long process of making a bill into law would have to be begun again.

Most observers say the legislators will pack up and go home by this Wednesday at the latest, perhaps even by Tuesday.

If the current bill is not sent to the governor by then it is likely it never will become law.

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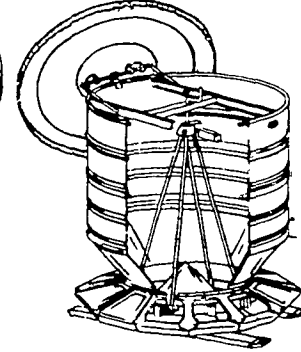
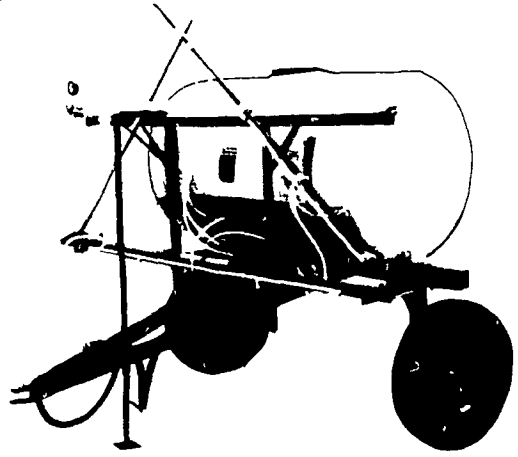
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