

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

The letter from M. Martin in your July 12 issue merits response

Martin depicts me as a disgruntled former employee of Eastern Milk Producers seeking revenge. That's the general line adopted by the cooperative's leaders...their best answer to the series of articles depicting how screwed up things are within Eastern Milk Producers in my publication, "The Milkweed," and a year ago in "Farm Journal". As someone formerly associated with Eastern (a long time ago), I do have some insights into the overall workings of the cooperative.

Eastern Milk Producers members need look only at their most recent milk checks and the letter from Mr. McDonald explaining how Eastern lost 66 cents per cwt., marketing May milk in Order 2 to know something is very wrong.

Had Eastern assessed the full 66 cents per cwt., marketing loss (instead of assigning to future "profits" from the mozzarella plants), an Eastern member producing 50,000 pounds for May would have incurred nearly \$1000 in marketing losses and assessments for the month (if such a producer chose to pay the full share of the \$2.5 million assessment in one lump). That is money farmers need for their families and their farming operations.

During the last year or

two, statements by Mr. McDonald and Mr. Tewksbury about Eastern's financial condition seem highly inaccurate. Members must question if they knew what was going on...or were honest in their reflections of the co-op's financial status.

Eastern's leaders have sought to intimidate the news media and members who questioned the cooperative's situation. The Co-op has a \$24 million lawsuit against members who brought the class action suit seeking an accounting of Eastern's finances. All those members wanted was an accounting of the co-op's finances for the last few years...to know where the millions and millions of dollars went.

Eastern has a \$15 million libel action pending against the Sayre, Pa. "Evening Times." Earlier this year, Eastern's legal counsel searched everything I'd

written about the Co-op for possible libel...to no avail.

One former director, William S Johnson of Orange County, NY, had a phony antibiotics charge brought against him in the spring of 1979. Johnson was an agitator, the Co-op walled off its boardroom with concrete blocks because Johnson ranted and raved about the need to do things in a business-like manner. And Max Lonstein, who recently retired from the board of directors, was subjected to much personal abuse for his attempts to bring honesty to the Co-op's affairs.

The cooperative movement in Order 2 is a mess. The losses and shennanigans at Eastern are driving members out in droves. Real economic progress in the region's dairy industry will come only through solid, honest cooperatives, and that goal seems further away each day.

I feel sorry for dairy farmers who are "trapped" into a milk market with an ineptly run cooperative. That is a modern day form of serfdom.

If there's some good news at Eastern, it is that the new president, Mr. Korona, appears to be of an independent mind and is trying to shake things up. Let's hope it's not too late. The Leprino contract...and the penalties for un-

dersupplying it by Eastern members. hang over members farms.

Everywhere else in this country, dairy cooperatives are basic assets to members' dairy businesses. Why not in the New York-New Jersey milkshed? Because too often farmers have selected their leadership poorly and failed to demand economic performance from cooperatives similar to the rest of the business world.

When the dust settles at Eastern Milk Producers, people will better understand why a few dozen members, a few former directors, and a journalist or two have contended something stinks.

Pete Hardin, Editor
The Milkweed

Dear Editor:

I am constantly amazed at the erratic statements concerning airport zoning in reports by Sheila Miller.

In the July 5th issue of Lancaster Farming Mrs. Miller uses the heading "Farmers win battle, township denies airport rezoning," where is the battle?

This is a false heading. There was no battle as far as Reigle Airport is concerned. The airport owners asked for that which they are entitled to; they will continue to do so. What farmers?

Reference here must have been made to Harold & Gladys Brandt who caused trouble for 40 years. Miller also states rezoning

would have created an airport hazard zone. Absolutely not true. The zone is already there; it is an open safety approach to the runway at either end.

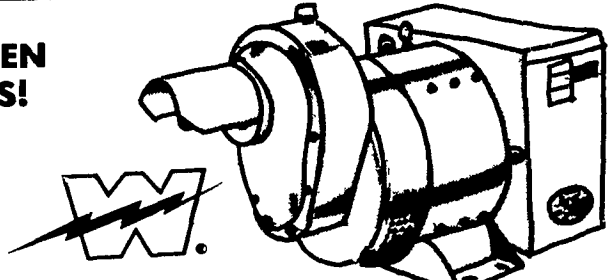
She further states that farmers could not build structures higher than 35 feet. That is already true in R-1 zoning. She doesn't know too much about zoning. What's her point?

Mr. Editor, I am a farmer and I never went along with the statement "dumb farmers". However, if your farmer readers believe Mrs. Miller's comments, I shall have to admit there is truth in the saying, "dumb farmers"

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Reigle Airport
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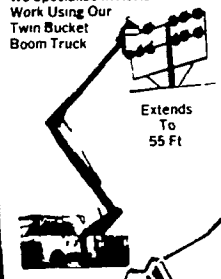
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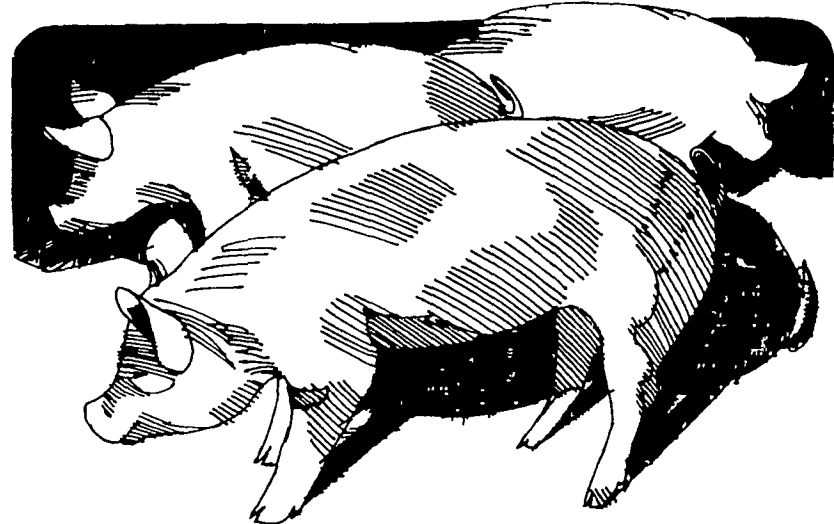
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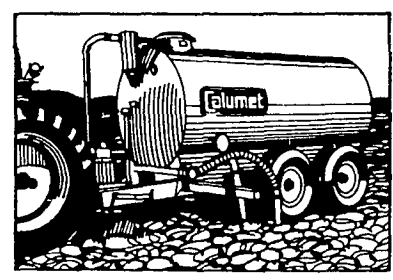
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