

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR

Lancaster Farming says...

What price milk marketing freedom?

Lehigh Valley Farms has called for an end to milk price fixing by the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board.

It should come as no surprise that Lehigh Valley Farms, one of the area's larger cooperatives, also is one of the state's largest milk dealers.

Any such move would free up competition in the dairy industry. And Lehigh is banking its future on some innovative ideas, including expansion of markets and successful promotion of its own brand name advertising.

What Lehigh and its sister business Atlantic Processing, Inc. want is legislation to eliminate PMMB's ability to set minimum prices that dealers charge supermarkets and stores charge consumers.

If nothing else, API President Robert Barry rocked the Pennsylvania milk marketing boat when

he called for a system to let milk prices seek their own level.

The only qualification Barry's statement included was one which would allow PMMB to be sure milk dealers don't sell below their costs.

There's plenty of meat for discussion in the proposal.

In many dairymen's minds, such a move will throw API and associates into the same group as the CNI folks who want to get rid of federal milk marketing orders for much the same reason: less government control and a free-floating milk price.

Two questions need to be answered: Is Lehigh trying to float the crest of the popular consumerist fads to free up milk markets? And, if accepted, would Lehigh's proposal help only Lehigh Valley Farms or would it be a benefit to all Pennsylvania dairy farmers?

The ultimate reason for both federal orders and PMMB's price

fixing power can be summed up in two words: 'stable market'.

The powers-that-be have held a stable market up as the most desirable of situations for dairy farmers. A stable market, we are reminded, means a steady flow of good milk to consumers at a reasonable cost.

It would be nice if the system always worked, but it doesn't. The fault is not the Milk Marketing Board's, but the system which it must manage.

Lehigh estimates 60 percent of the milk sold in Pennsylvania is tolled. Tolling allows milk to be processed at a negotiated fee.

Individual farmers jug milk on their own farms, legally getting around minimum price rules and making good profits in the bargain.

School milk pricing as well as store pricing varies widely from one end of the state to the other, often with little apparent reason Lehigh says

Stable markets mean the farmer can be fairly sure of a milk pickup every few days. It means the farmer can offer the bank some market security.

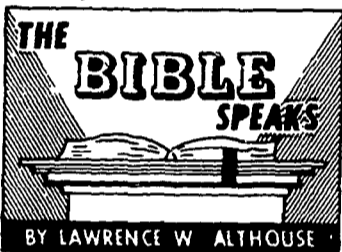
Stable markets also put a lid on prices the farmer can expect at the farm.

In grabbing for stable markets the farmer must let go any hold on a cherished free market economy. The farmer gives up the right to sell his product at open bid.

The farmer says Washington or Harrisburg knows better what a reasonable price is for milk than the producer does.

In short, the farmer trades his right to a free market for the security of a guaranteed sale. The cost of our stable markets is paid at the price of individual freedom.

It's a bargain most dairymen, until now, have seemed willing to accept. Are the times changing?



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

September 21, 1980

Background Scripture: Exodus 2:23 through 3:14; 19:1-19.

Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 17:7-13. To Abraham, God had

made some extravagant promises of what he would do with and for Abraham's descendents. When generations later God comes to Moses leading the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, he begins his talk of the covenant, not with promises, but with declarations that he has been true to the commitment he had made: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (19:4).

NOW THEREFORE...

Thus the covenant which God offers to the people through Moses begins with

the reminders of what God has already done for his people. Abraham had had only a promise from God, but Moses and the Israelites had seen that promise vindicated in their own lives.

It is because of this that God also now begins to enlarge upon what he wants in return: "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples" (19:5). Because God has followed them with a special providence, he also expects from them a special relationship: "...you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (19:6).

It is a great responsibility, but when Moses explains it to the Israelites there is no hesitation for them to make the commitment God seeks: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (17:8). God has made his eloquent offer and his people have readily accepted. There will be an expanded covenant between God and his people under Moses.

SET BOUNDS FOR THE PEOPLE

But that was not to be the end of it. This new covenant between God and his people needed a solemn occasion by which this agreement would be fully etched upon the hearts and minds of the

people. And this is where ritual entered in: by means of ritual the covenant was dramatized for the people's benefit. There were three main elements to this ritual: prepare for the institution of the covenant: "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments..." (19:11). By these acts the people would better realize that they were being set apart for a special relationship.

Secondly, God himself would appear before the people, coming in fire and smoke and a thundering voice from the mountain. It was not enough for Moses to

assure them that he had talked with God; the time had come when the people had to see it for themselves.

And finally, "you shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, 'Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death' (19:12). There has to be some sacred place or experience in our midst, a place where we do not defile with easy familiarity. There needs to be an experience of the awesome "otherness" of God that both sobers and deepens our covenant relationship.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
Phone 394-6851



TO PREPARE FOR WINTER

The other morning when the thermometer dropped into the forties, and you could see your breath in the cold air, it reminded me that winter is approaching. This usually means colder weather and higher fuel costs. What have you done to

reduce energy needs in your home or heated buildings? The Penn State Engineers say there are dozens of things that can be done to cut down fuel costs; however, most of us do not take the time to eliminate the hot air leaks. The place to start might be storm doors and windows, insulation, caulking, and sealing. Many homes and buildings were constructed while fuel costs were much lower. Now it is important to invest in these energy-saving practices to

reduce mounting fuel costs. We urge some attention to these practices before freezing weather arrives. Your check book will benefit from your efforts.

TO LIME GROUND FOR WINTER GRAINS

Soil testing is a good practice at any time of the year but applying the needed lime before seeding winter barley or wheat is a very good practice. The small grain will yield better and if the area is to be seeded down to a legume mixture, the

lime will have time to sweeten the soil. Some farmers will apply the lime on top of the grain next spring. This is not a good practice and legume failures might be the result. Give the lime a chance to work in the topsoil for several months before the alfalfa or clover are seeded. Soil testing in the fall is strongly recommended in preparing for next season's crops.

TO PLAN

HOME FIRE ESCAPES
Do you have a definite

escape plan for your family in case of fire during the night? Home fires are blamed for disabling or killing thousands of people each year. Most of these might be avoided by having smoke detectors with a rehearsed home fire escape plan. To some folks this might seem unnecessary, but families with youngsters should take this suggestion seriously and give it some attention. Work out a home

fire escape plan for each room in the house; this is especially needed for youngsters and for bedrooms. Make sure windows and door can be quickly opened. Show youngsters how to break glass in windows or doors with a chair leg. Some families might have fire ropes or ladders for escape to a deck, roof, or the

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Farm Calendar

Today, September 20
Western Pa. 4-H Goat Show; Mercer 4-H Park.
Chester-Delaware Grange Old Time Day.
Pa. State Jersey Cattle Sale; 12:30 p.m.; Guernsey Pavilion, Lancaster.
Delaware Valley Old Time Power and Equipment Assn. Farm Equipment Expo; Washington Crossing Park, Washington Crossing, N.J.; continues through tomorrow.
Seminar in Horse Anatomy; Center of Adult

Education, University of Maryland Campus; 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, September 21
Farrier Forging Contest; New Boiton Center, Kennett Square.
Monday, September 22
Pa. All American Dairy Show; continues through Friday; Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.
Bloomsburg Fair; continues through September 27; Bloomsburg.
York County Dump Meeting and Prayer Vigil; 6 p.m.; (Turn to Page A39)

CHRIS CLOPPER

