

Dairylea, Mid-Am talking cheese joint venture

BY CURT HARLER
PEARL RIVER, N.Y. — Talks are proceeding on a joint venture cheese operation involving Dairylea Cooperative, Inc. of Pearl River, N.Y. and Mid-American Dairymen of Springfield, Missouri.

The cheesemaking deal, if concluded, would provide a substantial milk market for

Northeastern Pennsylvania and New York dairy farmers.

Dairylea said local milk would be used and it foresees no milk coming in from the midwest.

As of this week, negotiations were being conducted on the establishment of a jointly owned company which probably will be called Adams Cheese Company.

The cheese plant would be a renovation of the existing Dairylea Adams, N.Y. plant.

Mid-Am markets products throughout the country, has a chain of fluid and manufacturing plants, and is involved in some way in at least eight subsidiaries.

Early estimates of the cost of the Adams project are about \$9.5 million.

The Jefferson County, N.Y. Industrial Development Authority has approved an inducement resolution. Basically, such a

resolution says that loan money would be made available to Dairylea and Mid-Am if they conclude the agreement.

There is a ceiling clause in the loan that says the loan can not exceed \$10 million.

In the beginning the plant probably would continue to produce cheddar cheese. But no one seems to be ruling out the possibility of expanding into other types of cheese should the operation roll smoothly.

No timetable has been set for the project. But a spokesman for Dairylea said the Co-op remains optimistic about bringing the deal to conclusion with Mid-Am and said if agreement is reached the pair will attempt to finish the project as quickly as possible.

Members of Dairylea probably will get more details on the project and an update on progress from General Manager Ed Mertz at the annual meeting scheduled for October 15 and 16 at the Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, N.Y.

Keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting Banquet on Wednesday night will be Gary Hanman, executive vice president and general manager of Mid-Am.

It is quite likely he will have some remarks to make on the proposed joint venture.

But Dairylea said earlier this week it does not expect to have a grand announcement at the annual meeting, and noted it would prefer to remain conservative on any projections.

Still, other plans are moving along. A modern pollution control plant is on the drawingboard. The plant is said to be a model of its type. It is designed to turn the whey into a profitable by-product, rather than a waste, from the plant.

In the meantime, Dairylea and Mid-Am are dealing with other particulars like local environmental impact statements, zoning requirements and the like, obviously anticipating a successful conclusion to the on-going negotiations.

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Either way, the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Division of Marketing is once again getting ready to help you out through its upcoming "Hay and Straw Directory" which lists farmers with hay and straw to sell.

Brad Powers, MDA Marketing Specialist who compiles the directory, says he is getting ready to do a Fall 1980 edition and wants to hear from farmers with hay and straw to sell so that, free of charge, he can list it in the directory.

The guide lists the farmers by county with information as to the type and quantity of hay and straw they have for sale. It's up to buyers to negotiate over the price.

So, if you have hay and straw for sale this year please contact Powers as soon as possible by writing to him at the following address: "Hay and Straw", c/o Marketing Division, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Parole Plaza Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

If you are a buyer, you can write to the same address now and request that a copy of the directory, which should be ready by late October, be sent to you as soon as it comes off the press.

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