Surplus solution begins at farm

COLLEGE PARK, Md. - As has occurred many times in the past, we are again in a situation where the short term interests of individual dairy farmers are in conflict with the long range health and strength of the dairy industry, says University of Maryland dairy science chairman, R.F. Davis. This places dairymen between a rock and a hard place.

If the dairyman takes full advantage of the current opportunities for his individual farm, he is contributing to long range problems and difficulties of the overall industry.

When milk prices are relatively high and costs of feed and other production items are relatively low, dairymen expand the size of enter the field of dairying, and individuals planning to leave the field delay, doing so.

In the United States, we have iust come through such a period and although there are signs of it tapering off, the momentum of increased milk production is still strong.

Production is anticipated to reach an all-time high this year of approximately 130 billion pounds. If the future trend in milk production is not downward, the surplus production of milk may destroy the market structure which has served dairymen in the past.

Consumer resistance to high prices, resistance of the govern-

dairy herds, more individuals ment to the relative high costs of price support programs, competition from imported dairy products and imitation or substitute dairy products will dramatically reduce prices and pose the possibility of chaotic conditions in the market.

For the long term health and strength of the dairy industry, and the continuing opportunity for individual dairymen to work successfully in it, total milk supplies must decrease.

How do individual dairymen react to the conflicting goals of maximum profit for their individual businesses in the short run, and yet, support the long term health and strength of the dairy industry?

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Nothing will happen unless indıvidual dairymen take the leadership and initiative. Waiting for the other fellow to act won't get the job done. Every dairyman must make it a priority to reduce total milk production.

An aggressive program of culling increases the efficiency of milk production on the farm, and reduces the total amount of milk going to market. Aggressive action along the following lines will help to achieve these goals:

~ Cull low producing cows and do not feed heifers from cows from the lower third of the herd unless they are sired by bulls with predicted differences that are expected to generate marked improvement.

- Sell cows that are not pregnant within 5 months of calving.

~ Cull cows with health problems that are not likely to

These problems include unsound udders, feet and legs, or recurring physiological problems such as milk fever and twisted stomachs.

~ Carefully evaluate the mastitis situation in your herd. Animals with chronic mastitis are not producing at capacity and may not be paying for themselves. Removing infected cows from your herd reduces the chance of spreading infection to other cows.

- Take a careful look at cows that are management problems, hard milkers, mean dispositions, unruly boss cows, or those who can't make it in your management situations. Some of these may be costing more than they are paying you. Move them out.

Although adjustments at this time may be painful, it is essential that action be taken by the industry, and this means action by individual dairymen and collective



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