

OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

In search of the REAL thing

The United Dairy Industry Association notes that each dairy product has a specified identity that conforms to federal and state standards. And only products that conform can carry the "REAL" Seal trademark.

The Seal, a symbolic drop of milk enclosing the word "REAL," can only appear on genuine dairy foods produced in the United States.

Butter, which was defined by an act of Congress, has its A and B grades; Cheddar cheese, cottage cheese and instant nonfat dry milk have specific marks of quality as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Thus, American consumers of dairy foods get the value they pay for and the product they expect to get. No surprises.

But it wasn't always that way.

In the post-caveman era, standards were set by the size of the chief's hand or foot. That was bad enough, but it also limited commerce because a foot was not the same length in each village.

Relics from the Egyptian period show pyramid builders checking their rulers against the Royal Cubit, a measure of the pharaoh's arm from finger tips to elbow that was traced on black marble. This is the first recorded effort to develop a standard measure, which was still related to the tradition of using the foot of their leader.

The Babylonians standardized measures in order to trade with other countries. Then the Greeks borrowed from their predecessors. And the Romans pushed standards throughout the world in step with their conquests. They established one standard foot of 12 inches and a "mile," the forerunner of the present mile, as a thousand two-stride paces of five feet each.

Julius Caesar standardized the calendar and got a month named after him. The Magna Carta in 1215 demanded standard measures for ale, grain and cloth. In 1875, the Treaty of the Metre was signed in France setting up the International Bureau of Weights and Measures.

We contend that many people look for safety standards such as "Approved by Underwriters Laboratory" or they recognize the Good Housekeeping "Seal of Approval." Items made with steel, wool or cotton often carry distinctive symbols indicating materials used in their manufacture.

Now the dairy industry has its "REAL" Seal. That distinctive symbol can be found only on genuine dairy foods certified by American Dairy Association to display the Seal.

We agree it's a long walk from a chief's foot to today's symbols of quality. Hope you enjoyed the trip.

John F. Brookman
Vice President
Communications
UDIA

America's sold short

During the past decade the USA has had various grain embargoes and grain trade agreements that have unilaterally limited and controlled grain exports.

They do not create demand — they control price and actually prevent increase in export volume that would occur in the absence of such agreements. This socialization of the international market place has deprived the USA of a supply-demand market and substantial income to its producers and to the U.S. Treasury.

This intervention in the export grain market provides sales that are below the farmers' cost of production. The subsidy of underpriced grain goes to wealth-

trade competitors — the European Economic Community, Japan, OPEC countries, and the Soviet Union. The subsidy to poor countries destroys their incentive to produce and develop their own agriculture.

A proposal by Congressman Weaver of Oregon would have authorized setting a floor price on grain exports. It was defeated in the U.S. House of Representatives October 20, 1981, and the Reagan Administration refused to support it.

The U.S. Government is fighting producers instead of helping them as the government of Japan does for its producers.

S. Edward Murphy
Hanover

Retaining farmland is preferred

As we drive the highways and by-ways of Hunterdon County, New Jersey taking in the scenery around us, we can't help but be impressed with the beauty of it. To be sure, the wooded areas, the streams and ponds, lakes and rivers, interesting old bridges, quaint villages, well-kept homes, all contribute to the charm of the landscape.

But to many of us, it's the farmland — the rolling fields of crops at various stages of development, even after harvest, the attractive farmsteads, pastures with horses and cattle grazing.

Yes, it is an impressive area. With all its growth, all its development, Hunterdon continues to be one of New Jersey's most desirable counties. A great place to live!

Over the past two years or so,

we've become more and more involved in an on-going search for means by which we might preserve farmland. Some of us prefer the term retain farmland.

In the interim we've experienced two favorable (2:1) votes on farmland preservation bond issues ... at county level in 1980, state level in '81. We now have a County Agriculture Development Board in place and working hard to develop suitable and acceptable programs.

Progress has been steady and good, most of those involved would agree.

We do receive calls requesting information on easement purchases and agricultural districts. So, we know there is interest on the part of many land-owners in these programs.

One of the "facts of life" that was recognized early in the

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Now is the Time

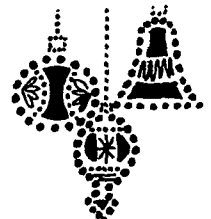
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entirely adequate to meet the needs of today.

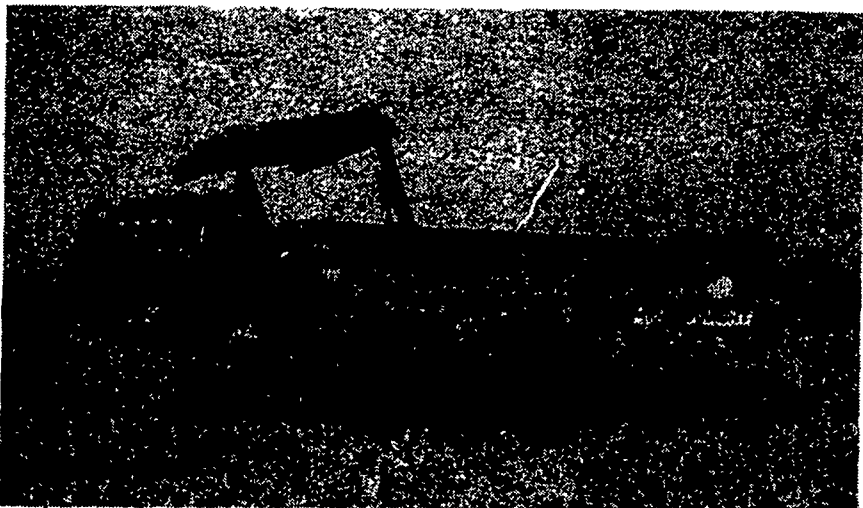
So, review the agreement carefully. If it doesn't quite measure up to current needs, plan to make necessary changes before 1982 rolls around.

To Be Concerned About Our Young Farmers

In the last ten years, the number of young farmers (age 35 and under) increased by more than 50%! According to population studies performed by the Economic Research Service there were 265,000 young farmers in 1970 and 401,000 in 1980. The fact that this trend occurred at a time when the total number of farmers was on the decline makes these figures all the more dramatic. Extension Agent, Glenn Shirk, emphasizes concern for these young farmers, particularly now, because of the rising costs of production and the depressed market situation. These costs are devastating to heavily indebted young farm families — and they are becoming a larger and larger portion of our total farm population. The existence of many young family farm operations is being threatened. At stake, too, is American agriculture in general and its allied industries, as well as production of agricultural products for future consumption and export.



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