

## OUR READERS WRITE

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production to restore a profitable price?

Psychologically speaking, farmers do not like to cut production. They know nobody ever paid for a farm by cutting production.

But when you have a government using farm crops for international political leverage by constantly threatening embargoes, keeping exports and prices down, don't farmers then have a right to take a subsidy to reduce production?

Farmers in ranch areas pasture off a lot of wheat every year. If they pasture off 10 percent more acreage this year in order to get a

subsidy payment on remaining acreage yield, what's wrong with that?

You are critical of Secretary Block's "too-late" with his programs. Did he or you know last August that Secretary "I am in charge" Haig was going to antagonize Russia by saying "We may embargo." These charges caused Russia to reduce purchases of wheat.

You suggest Secretary Block should go to Walter Reed hospital for Jet-lag disease. I suggest you go with him for faulty post-facto editorial disease.

C. Stanley Short, Sr.  
Kenton, Del.

### Better to buy groceries

As a northeastern Pennsylvania dairyman, I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed milk referendum for advertising based on the following reasons:

First, the whole issue has come about as a result of the support price freeze. It is understandable that the government is looking for ways to lower their expenditures for surplus dairy product purchases, and we know in theory the surplus could be lowered as a result of one of two factors or a combination of both; that is, producing less milk, or getting the consumer to buy more milk.

Can we expect the consumer to pick up the ball when he is in a financial bind like all of us today as a result of high energy costs (gasoline, electricity, etc.), not to mention the high cost of borrowing for autos, homes, and other household items? Many more are unemployed now compared to two years ago.

I believe the results of the New York dairy farmers experience in spending 11 cents per cwt for advertising last year and milk consumption declined anyway,

should tell us something about the times we are living in. Either the consumers never saw the ads, or they chose to buy less milk because they had no other choice from a food budget standpoint. It would be interesting to see if cereal sales were off also.

Let's face it. . . no matter how foolish it may seem, milk will usually be eliminated from the shopping list before coffee, tea, soft drinks, tobacco, etc. Since it is not known to be addictive, milk has tough competition when cuts have to be made in the budget, and common sense does not always rule. None of us can argue that point.

Can we expect the dairy farmer to cut back production voluntarily and lower his cash flow which isn't what it should be right now because of higher production costs, which boils down to the same problems the consumer faces? Should the dairy farmer shoulder the expense of advertising milk?

The farmer already has a market for his milk; he sells it wholesale to the folks that do whatever they do to put milk and

other dairy products in the retail stores. These folks we sell our milk to take all we have and must pay for all they take. These folks and their responsibility for advertising the milk is not clear to me, but maybe it's because I haven't been in this business long enough.

It seems that with all the headaches and heartaches that go into getting the milk into the tank ready for the milk truck to pick up in the first place . . . that should be enough. Farmers pay freight on milk to the folks that prepare it for the store . . . this charge was increased last fall. The milk now belongs to them to do what they want with it. Enough said.

The government is the only one left to look at. The government likes to see things run smoothly now and in the future. I am sure that their concern for farmers to get a fair and equitable price, and for consumers to have an adequate continuous supply of wholesome milk were among the reasons the government got into the milk business in the first place in the 1930s. . . not to mention the impact the farm purchasing power has upon the general economy of our nation. We spend it all.

I just wonder if the same government is doing all it can to help with the surplus. It is no secret that our dairy products compete with artificial dairy products and imported dairy products. Certainly this has to contribute to the fix our industry is in.

I've heard of government financial studies regarding cholesterol in milk, etc., which didn't help sales. The matter of government loans to keep a business going when it can't get credit any longer through normal channels, does this help us? Why do this if there is in fact, a surplus?

Is it any wonder that this nation has lost 30 per cent of its Class I

fluid milk sales over the past 10 years? How about the statistic of 8,000,000 abortions in the last decade (and it continues)? Youngsters that would be drinking milk today, had they been allowed to be born, would have an impact on our industry and other industries as well. Something is wrong — isn't it time the left hand of the government knew what the right hand is doing?

I do not intend to offend anyone, but in view of the New York dairy farmers' experience of lower milk consumption in spite of their 11 cent per cwt advertising effort, I fail to see how the authors of the proposal expect to do the opposite in a worse year. Instead of pointing the finger at the dairy farmer to

get us out of this one, we would do well to point the finger at those responsible for bringing our country to its knees.

Frankly, the \$9,000,000 proposed advertising fund isn't enough to compete with the beer and soft drink ads on billboards, radio and TV. This is where our competition gets the job done — not in farm magazines, etc. I believe our competition passes its advertising expenses on to consumers — we have to remember we are regulated and cannot do the same.

The 10 cent per cwt might be better spent putting groceries on the table as we wait out the storm. We don't need this proposal.

Paul J. Himka  
Nicholson, Pa.

### In defense

Let me come to Barbara Stewart's defense.

It was refreshing to read about a farmer's wife who didn't seem to be wearing a halo; i.e. she did so much you wondered if she ever slept.

I happen to be a farmer's wife who never went to the barn. I won't bore you, with all the things I did that didn't include sewing, gardening, canning, and milking cows.

I contributed just as much as the so-called barn wives, but didn't feel it necessary to wave a flag.

From my point of view farm publications are inclined to make farm wives sound super human.

Kitty Birch  
Stewartstown, Pa.

P.S. I got a manure spreader for Christmas once.

P.P.S. You should hear my views on the politics in farm organizations.

### Right or wrong

I too am concerned about animal rights. The Bills being introduced and the editorials being written are extremely unfair and unreasonable.

But, I must say we in the industry must clean up our act. I have seen and I am sure others have also, piles of dead veal calves outside of poorly managed veal barns; have had a neighbor who left the country in a bad winter and left several hundred brood cows without food or water (which made the Washington Post); and in my own

case went out of the veal calf business because of the way livestock barns mistreated calves after I purchased them. Injured eyes, legs, knots on their heads, etc., make it hard to get them started right.

If we give these untrained critics proper ammunition, they will in fact shoot us down. They are wrong; but we must be right in order to prove them wrong.

Frank B. Darcey, Jr.  
Fairfield, Pa.

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