



The Dairy Business

By
Newton Bair

HOW ABOUT NOAH'S ARK?

Here's an enigma within a riddle. Everyone knows that we are strangling in a flood of milk, but who is doing anything about it? The trouble is, every individual probably feels just as helpless as I do at this point. So we do nothing, except keep on producing more, and more, and more milk. And the flood gets higher all the time. Don't worry, Uncle Sam has an Ark that will save us from the flood. Maybe?

Secretary Block is very much aware of the problem, and particularly the almost intolerable dairy price support program. He admits that it is not only intolerable but "embarrassing" and cannot be continued as presently operated.

The figures we hear are sort of mind-boggling. If a quarter of a million dollars sounds like a lot of money, it is. But the surplus is costing the Government a quarter of a million dollars every hour, twenty-four hours a day! You and I may be able to justify the expenditure of 6 million dollars a day to keep the dairy business afloat, but it is pretty hard to argue the point with the rest of the taxpayers! Storage of the unwanted

surplus adds another 43 million a year to the cost.

It's nice to know that our dairy industry has this enormous capability to supply all the milk, cheese, butter, ice cream and other goodies we can use. But politically and economically it can be a disaster. We might be inclined to ignore the politics, but we can't ignore the economics, especially when the price of milk is established by legislative decree.

THE ARK IS LEAKY

Several options are available to the industry, to relieve the flood. We have tried foreign and domestic giveaways, and we (rather the Commodity Credit Corp.) had exported some of the surplus butter at a fraction of the purchase price. Anything that has been tried so far only takes care of a few drops in the big bucket anyway, and always is open to criticism. Meanwhile we continue to store the surplus and hope that a miracle will occur in the market place.

We can continue to store the surplus and hope that the domestic commercial markets can absorb the surplus in the near future.

Changes in the fluid milk standards should be made to allow

for more equitable pricing of milk solids and protein. Someone has suggested that we are already "eating" more milk and dairy products than we are drinking, anyhow.

In lieu of a support price for milk, there could be a subsidy paid on cull cows, to encourage more culling. However, this would also have the effect of further flooding the red meat market, and the beef feeders wouldn't stand still for that.

National Milk Producers Federation has offered a plan for producer funds to be used to buy any surpluses over the 5 billion pounds purchased by CCC. This would have to be initiated by an act of Congress and supported by a national referendum by dairy farmers. An appointed dairy board would advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the level of purchases, import quotas and the use of surplus dairy products.

A final solution to the problem would be to impose production or marketing quotas on all producers. It would have to be rigid and across-the-board. To achieve a 10 percent reduction in supplies, every producer would be allowed to ship only 90 percent of his proven, established base. Quotas could be established and enforced either by the industry itself or by government decree.

The only other possibility that suggests itself at this time is to convince consumers to drink more milk. That will take a serious and concerted effort by everyone, not only the dealers, to educate, promote and advertise the merits of milk and dairy products. I believe that it will take both generic and brand promotion to accomplish the job.

We must all work a little harder to assure that quality and flavor are good, and that stores, schools, and consumers handle milk and

dairy products properly. Milk and everything made from it is good, natural, healthful and nutritious.

My earnest concern is that we can, by some combination of the suggested measures or an as yet unforeseen miracle, bring the supply into balance with the demand, and still provide a decent return for producers. Younger dairy producers with high debt

loads will face some difficult decisions until the miracle happens.

You can help to build the "ark" by first believing there is a problem, then, giving all the support you can to those who must eventually try to solve it, however distasteful and difficult it might seem.

Hunterdon Co., N.J. leads state in tree seedling orders

FLEMINGTON, N.J. — Hunterdon County again leads in tree seedling orders from the New Jersey state-operated nursery, reports Calvin Wettstein, senior county agent.

A total of 48,500 seedlings will be distributed to 28 landowners in the county this month by the Bureau of Forest Management, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, he announces.

Area Foresters assigned to Hunterdon, Mike D'Errico and Duke Grimes, coordinate the effort at the local level. They have been involved in aiding the land-owner in determining if site is suitable and in selection of varieties. They also arrange for truck delivery to the Extension Center parking lot and distribution, Wettstein explains.

Of the seedlings ordered, most are 3-year old white pine. Other evergreens in sizable numbers are 2-year-old Norway and white spruce. Tulip poplar, red oak and black locust make up the hardwoods on order.

The state nursery-produced seedlings are available to farmers and land-owners principally for reforestation. Purchasers may cut developed trees for Christmas trees, but only up to 50 percent of those in a stand. And, they agree not to dig and sell any trees, Wettstein remarks.

The Bureau of Forest Management and the Cooperative Extension Service have jointly promoted reforestation of idle land, steep slopes, areas not suitable for farming, for many years. Site inspection by an area forester and completion of an order takes place before a January 31 deadline. Seedlings arrive in April for immediate planting.

"Planting a thousand tree seedlings is quite a chore," says Wettstein. "A thousand trees will generally cover an acre or more depending on species."

"Many resort to hand-planting with a spade or pick mattock. Others use the service of several tree planting machines operating in the county."



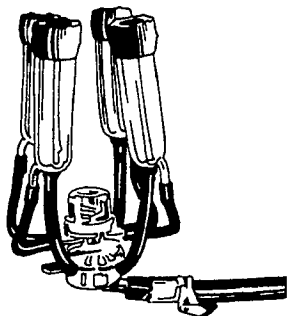
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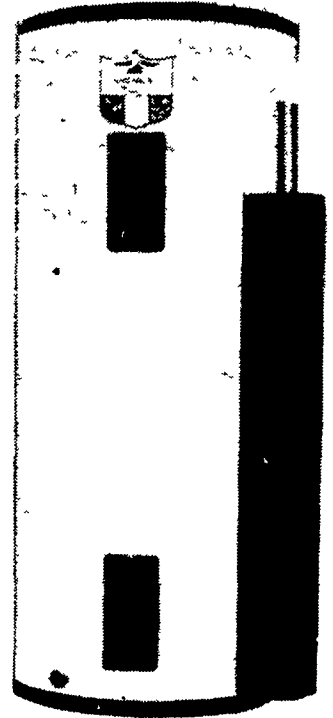
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