

Block

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and virtually everything else, competitive with any country in the world. But in dairy we've got some problems in terms of exports," he said.

"We're losing domestic markets and we're losing exports." The paradox, said Block, is that the U.S. has the best management, facilities and finest cattle in the world, yet cannot compete on the world market.

"One of the biggest problems is the rigidity of the government program," he explained. "We don't

intend to destroy the program. We're trying to keep it basically as it is. I hope we don't have to lower the prices at all. We want to give some time for adjustment."

Block noted that the U.S. can export many dairy products, provided they are exported at domestic prices. He said surplus dairy products also can be exported at domestic prices.

"But we cannot undercut the world market by selling them at a discount," said Block.

When asked about the possibility of an export trading company, Block explained that legislation is now in Congress which will provide the framework for such a company. He said the companies could offer a

"smorgasbord" of commodities ranging from cattle to machinery.

The secretary was asked whether he thought raising the minimum standards of milk, a provision in his plan, would help dry up some of the surplus.

"We don't pretend to think we can order all the states to do this," said Block. "But we do think it would be very useful to encourage it. The milk tastes better when it's that way in my opinion."

Block noted that he does not support any major changes in the commodity programs of the Farm Bill. While the secretary admitted the 1981 Farm Bill was less than perfect, he said he felt it was a good bill which will serve agriculture.



At a luncheon, which followed the president's visit, Block receives a dozen roses from Joan F. Pew, Commissioner for Pa. State Horse Racing and a basket of Chester County mushrooms from the president's host Leon Wilkinson.

U.S. Senate Ag Committee to hear testimony on U.S. dairy program

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, announced Tuesday that a hearing on S. 2533 and other proposals to make adjustments in the dairy price support program will be held May 27.

Senator Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Agricultural Production, Marketing and Stabilization of Prices, will preside at the hearing, which is scheduled for 10 a.m. in Room 324 Russell Senate Office Building.

Helms and Cochran said the hearing will focus on the Administration proposals to make adjustments in the dairy program as well as proposals supported by industry, Congressional leaders, and other interested groups.

On Monday, May 17, Senator Helms introduced the Administration bill, S. 2533. Among the proposals included in S. 2533 would be the enactment of legislation which would give the Secretary of Agriculture discretionary authority to set the milk price support level. Other features of the bill include providing for a Dairy Advisory Board and Commodity Credit Corporation authority to donate more dairy products in the United States and abroad.

In introducing the Emergency Dairy Adjustment Act of 1982, Helms said, "There is almost unanimous consensus that the adjustments made in the dairy provisions of the 1981 Farm Bill have not accomplished what was intended. Government expenditures are likely to exceed \$2 billion and may be more than 25 percent greater than that. Production is increasing in the face of almost unbelievable surpluses," Helms said.

"Obviously, it is in the interest of dairy farmers, the dairy program, consumers, and taxpayers that Congress make further adjustments in the program. Congressional action has created the problem, and now it is up to the Congress to correct it," he continued.

Helms said that the Administration's bill will provide the guidance for the hearing. "Producers are willing to do their fair share, and at this time, there

appear to be several alternative suggestions. I believe we will have a number of them on the table by the time the hearings are held," he said.

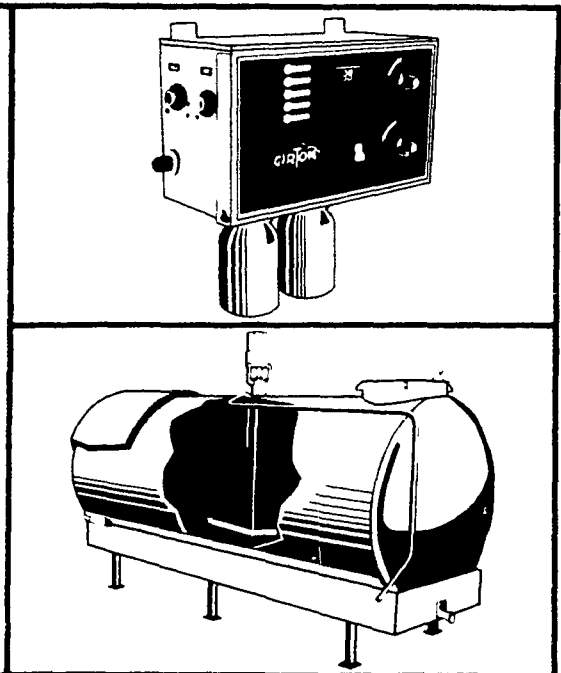
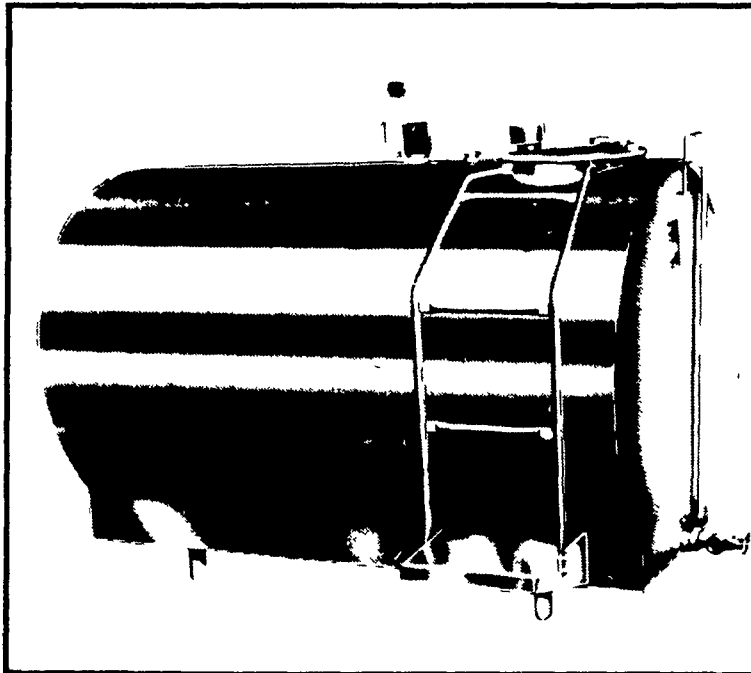
Senator Cochran said, "It is important that we find some means of bringing the costs to the

government under control, while maintaining a fundamentally sound dairy industry to meet consumer needs."

Witnesses at the hearing will represent the Administration, the dairy industry, and other interested parties.

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