

Block suggests Extension can help in surplus distribution

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Help in setting up and carrying out state plans to distribute surplus dairy products was suggested to governors recently by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

In a letter to governors, Block suggested the assistance of the Cooperative Extension Services and of each state's Food and Agriculture Council, composed of representatives of U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies.

At the same time, he stressed the need for involvement of the private sector and volunteers in any distribution efforts.

Block cited Minnesota as an example of a successful distribution program that involved the private sector and 5,000 volunteers. The endeavor, he noted, was headed by Robert Bonine of the Pillsbury Company, and trucks were volunteered by Super Valu stores and by Land

O'Lakes.

The Minnesota effort, he said, reached 499,000 people, or one of every eight citizens in the state. Each of the needy persons was provided eight pounds of dry milk, five pounds of cheese and four pounds of butter.

"This is a remarkable example of what can be done for the public when government agencies, private industry and voluntary organizations pool their resources and skills," Block said.

Block said he is asking the Extension Services nationwide to serve as a resource to the governor's office of each state in support of the state's distribution program. Many Extension offices already are cooperating in distributing USDA dairy products, Block said, providing, among other help, information about how to store and

use the cheese.

The Extension Service, he said, would be able to advise on the development of statewide distribution plans for both urban and rural areas, could assist officials in identifying distribution sites and volunteer assistance.

Further assistance could be obtained from each state's Food and Agriculture Council, Block said.

"They are familiar with the program and could be useful to you in identifying volunteer sources that could be approached for help," he said. "By working together, we can help make this effort a truly useful supplement to the diets of even more of the nation's less fortunate citizens."

In his letter, Block noted the approach of the "traditional season for sharing abundance and

for demonstrating concern for our fellow citizens."

USDA still is holding in uncommitted inventory about 800 million pounds of cheese and 400 million pounds of butter. The dairy products were bought under the federal dairy price support program.

On Dec. 1, Block announced continuation of the distribution of surplus cheese and butter nationwide through December 1983. In the existing program, parts of which began almost a year ago, USDA has delivered to states more than 135 million pounds of cheese and 8.2 million pounds of butter.

Farm Talk


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greedy individuals who grabbed too much too quickly are getting what they deserve.

That's a harsh judgment, and it would be difficult to say who deserves to go bankrupt and who doesn't. But as long as there are tremendous opportunities with associated high risks there will be those who succeed and those who fail.

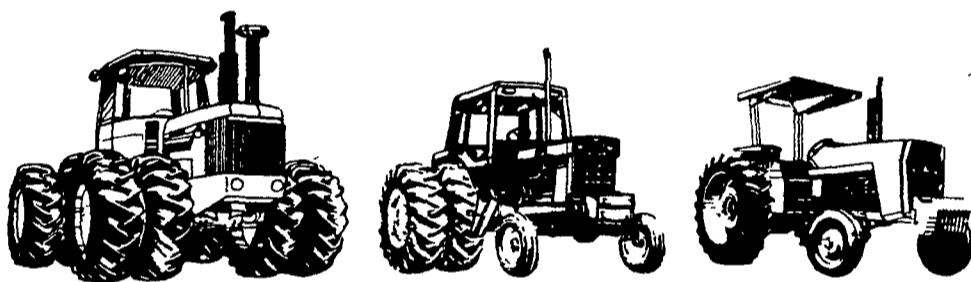
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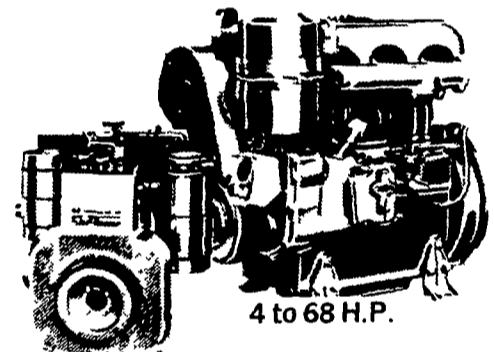


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