

# Lehigh Valley to seek 600 new members

**BY TRISH WILLIAMS**  
**LANCASTER** — Lehigh Valley Farmers held its annual business meeting Tuesday at the Host Farm, where the cooperative reported to 500 producer-members an 18 percent increase in volume of milk sold over last year. The cooperative sold over 730 million pounds of milk in 1982, with a value set at \$101 million and generated a net margin of \$2.5 million.

The \$2.5 million margin will be distributed to the farmers in certificates of equity and in cash dividends totaling \$350,000 according to President Alpheus L. Ruth. Part of this dividend had been advanced to the producers last fall. Of the payments the farmers received during the year, \$508,000 was in premiums and quality control bonuses.

The big news of the day was the announcement of an aggressive media campaign to attract 600 new members to the existing 1,139.

"Atlantic Processing, the dairy federation that guarantees to market all our milk, needs a lot more of it," Ruth said. "We ship them two thirds of the billion plus pounds they handle annually and we'd like to increase that percentage. That way we'll build more equity for ourselves in API."

Ruth pointed out that Lehigh Valley Farmers equity in API had neared the \$3 million mark. Other cooperative members of the API federation include Mt. Joy, Inter-State and Dairylea.

The president indicated the goal of 600 members in 1983 means that Lehigh will have to grow at five times last year's rate, when 109 new members signed up (adjusting for attrition caused primarily from the sale of many dairy farms).

As part of the membership drive, the co-op will use newspaper and radio advertising. Samples of these were built into the presentation along with the theme of the meeting: "Quality...makes the difference."

While the business session was going on, there was a separate homemaking presentation for women by Jane Seidel, Fay Strickler, Judith Stoudt & Phoebe Bitler, of the Berks County Extension Service.

At the luncheon following the business meeting, awards were presented to dairy farmers who had achieved honor roll status for maintaining high quality. Clair S. and Jackson E. Duvall, Du Valley Farm, received an honor plaque for having maintained a Standard Plate Count of 8,000, or less, for the entire year of 1982.

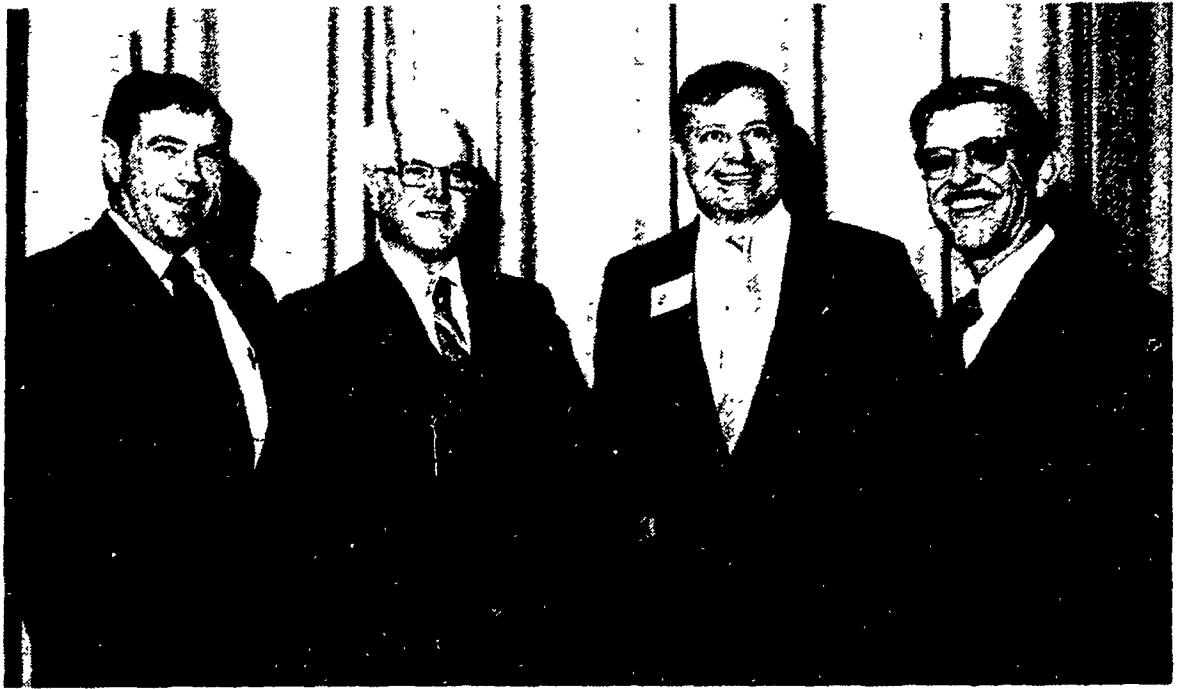
Atlantic Processing Inc. presented producer Allen Andrews with an honor plaque for having maintained a Somatic Cell count of 300,000, or less, throughout 1982.

Members who achieved the Honor Roll each month for the year 1982 were also recognized. They were: Allen Andrews, Du Valley Farm, Clyde C. Frey, Robert D. Harnish, Bruce J. Leiby, and Milton Hershey School (2 farms).

Aaron Landis, field service representative, who is retiring after 48 years of service with Lehigh and predecessor organizations, received special recognition.

Lancaster County Agent, Glenn A. Shirk was Master of Ceremonies for the luncheon.

Guest speakers were Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell and Edward Coughlin, head of the



Pa. Sec. of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell, left, and Edward Coughlin, head of the dairy division of the USDA, third from left, guest speakers at Lehigh Valley Farmers annual meeting are pictured with Lehigh Valley Farmers President Alpheus L. Ruth, second from left, and Executive Vice President and General Manager William M. Stout.

dairy division of the U.S. department of agriculture.

Secretary Hallowell shared with Lehigh Valley Farmers, his impressions of his recent trip to the Middle East to promote Pennsylvania's agricultural products. Hallowell reported a successful trip, but emphasized the need for continued promotion at the local level and abroad, citing stiff competition and promotion at the local level by other countries, such as France.

Hallowell told farmers that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has done a lot to help promote milk and to assure its

quality through the various marketing channels, and pledged continued support from the department.

Hallowell told farmers they had reason to be optimistic about the coming year because of lower fuel costs had a lower rate of inflation, but warned farmers that their optimism should be tempered with realism.

Coughlin addressed the dairy surplus problem and congressional consideration of legislation being proposed as an alternative to the present 50 cents assessment. He said Congress will spend only one day on the issue and will probably

only consider three of the bills introduced. Most likely to be considered are the bills proposed by the National Milk Producers and Dairyman Inc.

The 50 cents assessment was a mathematical or accounting exercise to bring the books in line, said Coughlin. The dairy budget this year was \$600 million and over 1.2 billion has already been spent, so this 50 cent assessment concept is not dead yet in the Senate, warned Coughlin. According to Coughlin, the Budget Office predicts the dairy budget will not

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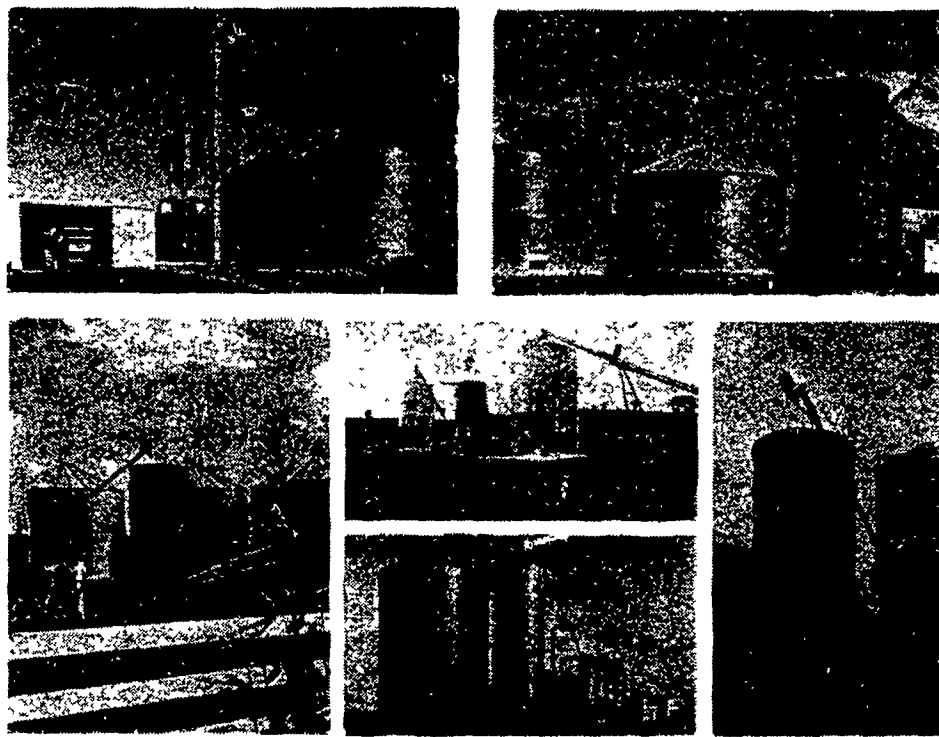
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