

# DO questions

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cows, Bob Kilgore sees the present unsettled condition of the dairy industry offering a logical time to retire. According to his wife, Isabel, their Airville herd of 45 Holsteins is up for sale and will be trucked away as soon as buyer negotiations are complete.

"I can't afford to cut back," flatly states dairy farmer Tom Stein, who began milking cows on his York farm just a few years ago.

Enthusiastic milk promoters see the advertising segment of the DO program as one of the best parts of the legislation.

"For once we have everyone contributing to advertising," rejoices E. Wayne Beshore, New Cumberland, a long-time member of the Atlantic Dairy Association's board. Funds will also offer sorely-needed research opportunities for new dairy products, he figures.

Ralph McGregor of East Berlin echoes that opinion, calling the 15-cent deduction the "most exciting part of the program."

While the legislation is basically a short-run solution to production surpluses, McGregor sees the advertising monies an investment in making milk and dairy products a bigger part of the American culture, while boosting the nation's health.

"Promotion is the only answer. We must increase consumption," agrees East Berlin producer Bob Smyser.

Since a producer can bid a reduction, then later change his mind before final signing, Smyser figures it might be a logical move for dairymen to submit a contract as a hedge against the final regulations release.

The Secretary of agriculture does have the power to reduce a dairyman's contract bid reduction figure, if he sees a critically short

supply of milk impending because of heavy signup, or for other reasons that could trigger a refusal to accept the dairyman's bid estimate. That counter-offer by USDA can also be refused. No producer is locked into a contract until final signing.

Marty Gray, manager of Sinking Spring's herd of registered Holsteins says he'll withhold final opinion until he sees the detailed regulations on selling breeding stock.

According to the initial regulations, milking animals sold after November 30, 1983 by a dairyman participating in the signup, must either go for slaughter or to another producer in the signup program. While USDA does have the authority to make exceptions, no decisions have been made to whether or how that authority will be used.

One dairyman who requested anonymity had little trouble ex-

pressing his opinion of the DO program, vehemently calling it "the worst lemon the government ever came up with."

On a brighter note in the Dairy Day program, Jud Heinrichs encouraged dairymen to look at computers as tools for the future.

Tongue-in-check, Heinrichs suggested to farmers that if they're thinking about a computer, they should buy one for their kids to play with, and then they'll learn to use it themselves.

More serious computer shoppers are advised to first look at the software, or programs available, then buy the hardware, or computer components, that will handle the kind of programs desired.

Production, breeding and health records are the most valuable services of computerization for dairy herds, says the Penn State

dairy extension specialist. While some programs are available for ration balancing, Heinrichs warned that many are not "user friendly," computer terminology for "easy to use."

Feeding and milking computers are the most common usage at present for dairy herds, adds Heinrichs, although the systems are geared to milking parlor automation, and not to tie-stall facilities.

Penn State at present has no plans to write dairy herd management programs, because of the many excellent ones already on the commercial market. However, it is anticipated that before long there will be technology available for on-farm computer systems to hook into the University's DHIA data.



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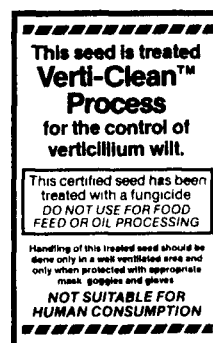
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