

Rutherford blasts 'free-riders,' urges co-op unity

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — A dairy cooperative leader has leveled blasts against producers and dealers who deride cooperatives for operating costs but want a free ride from the services the co-ops provide for the dairy industry.

In a talk to Cobleskill Agribusiness Association, Clyde Rutherford, president of Dairylea Cooperative Inc., also hammered hard on the need for common cause and unification of dairy cooperatives in the Northeast.

"When it comes to fighting the battles for dairy farmers, the only troops on the battleground with any ammunition are the dairy cooperatives," charged Rutherford, who is also the operator of a dairy farm in Otego, N.Y.

"The so-called independent producers have admitted they would be worried if they thought big dairy co-ops were in danger of disappearing. They recognize the principal reason they feel reasonably safe in shipping as independents is because the co-ops are around to fight for better prices, balance surplus milk supplies, do legislative work and deal with a hundred other complications of this industry. They recognize all this, but they want a free ride.

"If enough dairy farmers took the non-co-op route, we would be back in the 1930's in very short order. For those who may not have studied what happened in the 20's and 30's I can only say: take the time to find out. You may be surprised by a story of the virtual serfdom of American dairy farmers until the Dairyman's League was founded in 1907, later to become the Dairyman's League Cooperative Association, and then the Dairylea Cooperative in 1969.

Rutherford stressed that Dairylea has constructed a business organization during the past two years that has increased opportunity for ongoing profitability, greatly reduced debt, and established ownership participation in successful cooperative ventures.

He cited:
— Part ownership of Atlantic Processing Inc., a growing organization that markets milk of Dairylea members in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

— Membership interest in Upstate Milk Producers, which markets milk and dairy products in Western New York.

— A working relationship with Agri-Mark involving the use of a Dairylea plant in New York and the marketing of Dairylea members' milk in New England.

— Joint ownership of the O-AT-KA manufacturing cooperative in Batavia, N.Y.

— Working relationship with Associated Milk Producers Inc. of San Antonio, Texas for computer-tiem leasing at a very favorable cost.

— Affiliations with other cooperative — Allied Federated Cooperatives, Oneida-Madison Cooperative, Holland Patent Cooperative, St. Albans Cooperative, and Lehigh Valley Cooperatives — to provide various services from market order and information activities through marketing of milk.

In citing the need for more unity among cooperatives, Rutherford emphasized, "Perhaps the most important thing we have done for our members is to open up new avenues for solving problems that are common to all producer organizations... to make common

cause with all dairy organizations in the Northeast.

"I have said it often that there is no justification for the present number of dairy co-ops in the Northeast... and particularly in New York State. There are about 75 dairy co-ops in the state and only about 15,000 dairy farmers. There were not many more co-ops 30 years ago when there were more than 50,000 dairy farmers. Farmers should not be expected to carry the burden of duplicating hauling routes, duplicating office staffs, and duplicating services.

"Dairylea has stated publicly that we are ready and willing to talk unification with other co-ops. Let's not worry about who is to be president or who is to be the general manager. The important thing is to see if we can make that one big jump that will end the inter-cooperative rivalry which has hampered effective representation and effective marketing of milk in the past. It has been done in other parts of the country. It should be done here... and it can be done if dairy farmers

themselves demand it," Rutherford emphasized.

Now is the Time

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health maintenance in all cattle. In nursing mother cows, more feed is required to keep up milk production. Severe infections can also result in lowered resistance to secondary infections and anemia.

Along with repeat wormings, good pasture management can prevent massive parasite buildup. Leave pastures idle for several months if possible. This allows most of the infective larvae to die off without being replenished by eggs from infected hosts. If supplemental forage is supplied, feed troughs should be used to avoid the ingestion of infective parasites on the ground.

To Develop Safety Habits

We are aware that farming is not the safest occupation. In fact the average farm worker can expect that once every four years he'll be injured so severely that medical attention is needed. We also know that farming is even more dangerous than industrial work. Farmers have a work accident rate that's two and a half times greater than the average for all industries. The problem is, that unlike industry, farmers work with a minimal amount of supervision and they may not be properly trained for the job. We urge farmers during this busy season to take time to be safe.

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Ag Day opens in Del.

NEWARK, DEL. — Education and entertainment are striking a perfect balance at Ag Day at Townsend Hall on the University of Delaware campus in Newark today.

Starting at 10 a.m., animal lovers have the chance to visit the barnyard petting zoo and small animals from the SPCA. They can also watch a beekeeper at work, learn how cows are milked, and see able young competitors take wool from sheep to shawl.

Plant fanciers can talk to extension gardening specialists at the plant clinic, and attend a continuous series of lawn and garden demonstrations on pruning, transplanting, plant propagation, cultivation of strawberries, vegetable gardening, tree planting, lawn care, and the selection care and safety of lawn and garden power equipment. Early arrivals could purchase seedlings at bargain rates while their children keep busy making seed pictures.

Hungry people will be able to

start right in on the hot dogs and homemade bread, but the chicken barbecue, opens at 11 a.m. All food items will be available through the afternoon until sold out.

A bluegrass band is entertaining from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., and pony rides are available for 25 cents from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. A livestock show is scheduled from noon until 3 p.m. University of Delaware riders will display dressage techniques (dancing on horseback) from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Ag Day is open to everyone, and most events are free.

Farm Calendar

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- herd improvement sale, 7:30 p.m., Mercer 4-H Park.
- Intercollegiate Horse Show, Farm Show complex, continues tomorrow.
- Spring Feeder Calf Sale, 1 p.m., Hackettstown, N.J. auction market.
- Pa. Shorthorn Association annual

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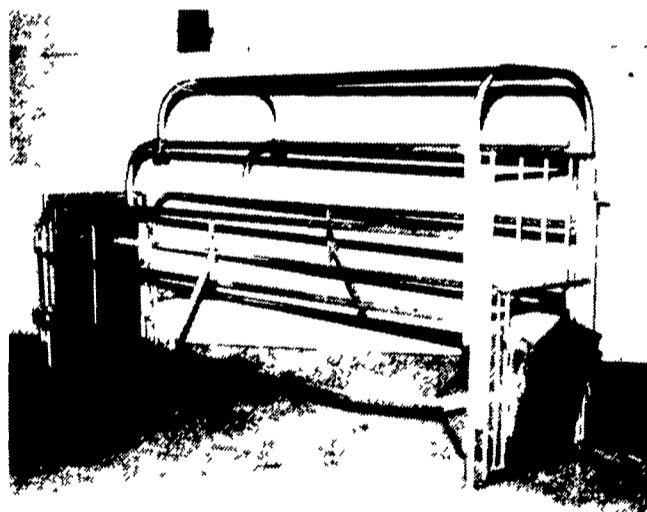
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