

Higher milk standards campaign launched

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
Staff Correspondent

COLUMBUS, Oh. — In a renewed effort to initiate legislation that would enforce higher minimum standards for milk and a fair pricing system to dairymen producers, the American Jersey Cattle Club has launched a nationwide campaign to include all dairymen.

Aimed at starting with the "grass roots", this "new kind of PAC (Political Action Committee) seeks to implement a healthier milk market and a better, more uniform milk for the consumer.

Stating that the committee is open to anyone interested in a better milk market and an improved product, Guy Crews, assistant secretary, National All-Jersey, Inc., advocates these policies as a possible solution to the current dairy crisis.

"We're trying to reach people that will really do something — call their legislature," he stated.

The American Jersey Cattle Club has developed literature and research on these two issues. Anyone interested in lending their support can contact the AJCC at 614-861-3636, or write P.O. Box 27310, Columbus, Ohio 43227. More information will be sent and a list of congressman and addresses will be included.

The case for higher minimum standards and component pricing is not a new one. In 1972, Dr. James Devero, research associate, United Dairy Industry Association reported:

"It is well established that the additions of solids-not-fat (SNF) will improve the flavor and consumer acceptance of milk beverages."

In 1983, AMPI did a consumer milk preference survey at the Food and Fitness Fair in Washington, D.C. Three out of five people surveyed preferred the taste of milk at higher standards over its counterpart at current standards. Almost all said they would be willing to spend a few cents more per half-gallon to purchase it.

In their campaign to have dairymen and consumers write to their congressmen to support higher standards, the American Jersey Cattle Club asserts that the consumer deserves a certain kind of milk.

"The consumer deserves a uniform product of excellent nutritional composition," it states.

According to a report by Grant Grayson, Federal Milk Market Administrator, there is a significant lack of uniformity of milks offered for sale to consumers by 73 handlers in 11 Federal Order milk markets. Fifty-nine percent

of the handlers whose products were evaluated failed to meet the legal standards. Some products labeled "fortified" were not fortified at all.

"And yet," stated a spokesman from the AJCC, "the consumer is led to believe that milk is milk - it's all alike. Consumers deserve to know more about the extreme variations in the nutritional content of milks. They deserve to have regulatory guarantee that certain minimum nutrition standards will be met by all milk products."

The terms - component pricing, end-product pricing, protein pricing, solids-not-fat pricing, etc. - all are designation of a milk pricing system that relates producer milk values to the sales value of product made from this milk. Component pricing will spotlight and give pricing emphasis to those milk constituents which lend most to flavor and nutrition. It will send up a signal to producers of milk since it will price milk on true values instead of quantity. It will send a signal to processors that they too are responsible to provide a more nutritious, more uniform product to consumers.

"The opponents of component pricing and minimum standards contend that consumer prices must go up if these changes are in-

roduced. In markets where the nutritional qualities of milk are low, this could happen. But, the real truth is that the consumer would be getting honest value in milk products for the first time," the AJCC explains.

The case of the AJCC is this:

1. A form of pricing must be instituted that reflects the true value of the product which dairymen bring to the marketplace.

2. There must be a fair distribution of monies among producers that reflects the real market value of their individual products.

3. There would be no incentive for adulteration. The incentive would be there for dairymen to produce a more tasty and nutritious product.

4. No other pricing system under consideration provides advantage for both producers of quality milk and consumers who have shown their desire for a more flavorful, more nutritious product.

The National Milk Producers Association, AMPI, Mid-America, The National Farm Bureau, several individual co-ops such as Dairylea and others (by published resolution) now stand in support of both these propositions.

Two congressional representatives, Boxer and Harkin, have introduced bills to raise standards. Two states, Illinois and Wisconsin, are dealing with legislation which would raise standards. The Federal Order Market Administrator has a task force studying a system of component pricing. Knowledgeable breeders of any persuasion are recognizing the need for both these changes.

What the American Jersey

Cattle Club encourages all dairymen to do is:

1. If a bill is introduced in your state legislature to raise milk standards, let your representatives know of your interest and support.

2. Let your co-op leadership know of your personal concern and support.

3. Write or call your congressman (a list is available from the AJCC) and tell them that you support the higher standards bills already before them. (Boxer HR 3178 and Harkin HR 441).

4. Write the Food and Drug Administration and tell them that you want standards raised. (address: 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.)

5. Write the Secretary of Agriculture and tell him the same story. (The Honorable John R. Block, Dept. of Agriculture, The Mall between 12th and 14th streets, Washington DC 20250.)

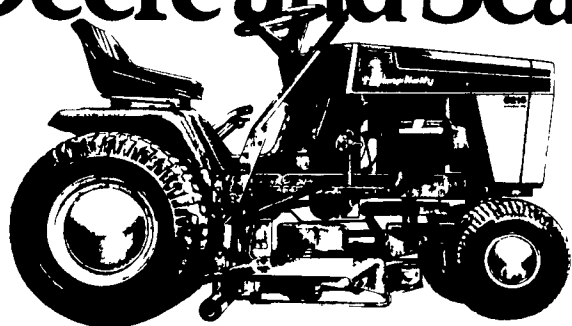
6. Write the National Milk Producers Federation and tell them the same, (NMPF, 1840 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va. 22201).

7. Write the Milk Industry Foundation and express your displeasure at its opposition to higher milk standards and its opposition to standardization of milk taste and quality to dilute your 15 cents contribution to national advertising. (MIF, 888 Sixteenth St., NW, Washington DC 20006).

8. Tell friends, neighbors, club members, nutritionists, food editors, anyone, of your position.

"Your reward will be a healthier milk market and a better, more uniform milk for the consumer," concludes the AJCC.

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Guernsey breeders to sponsor regional workshop

CHAMBERSBURG — The South Central Regional Fitting and Showmanship Workshop, sponsored by the Pa. Junior Guernsey Breeders' Association in cooperation with the Franklin County Extension Service, is scheduled for June 11 and 12 at the Shippensburg Fairgrounds.

The two-day event is open to any youth who has a dairy project, regardless of breed affiliation. Participants will be shown how to clip, trim hooves, wash their show animals, learn skills of showmanship and how to prepare the show box.

Demonstrations will be set up so that each participant works with a calf under trained supervision. The programs will be presented by outstanding dairy showmen and fitters.

Registration begins at 2 p.m., June 11, followed by group fitting and showing demonstrations, evening supper, sports activities, a movie and a campout. Tuesday's program will include individual work on each calf and lunch followed by a Fitting and Showing Contest at 12:30.

The workshop will conclude with the Fitting and Showing contest, and awards will be presented. Families are invited to attend the evening meal June 11, the luncheon on June 12 and the Fitting and Showing contest.

Registration deadline is June 1. For additional information and registration forms, please contact the Pa. Junior Guernsey Breeders' Association, 3107 Sollenberger Drive, Chambersburg, Pa. 17201. The phone number is 717-263-3367.

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