

# Pa. dairy industry leaders discuss 1985 Farm Bill

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Pennsylvania dairy industry leaders and representatives had the opportunity last week to air their concerns of the 1985 Farm Bill during a "listening session" conducted by Secretary of Agriculture John Block in Syracuse, N.Y.

Among the speakers was Keith Eckel, a dairyman and vegetable grower from Lackawanna County who serves as president of the Pa. Farmers Association. In his address during the "listening session," conducted by USDA to discuss future food and agriculture policy, Eckel said that PFA supports a "market-oriented" federal farm bill in 1985.

Eckel defined "market-oriented" as allowing supply and demand, rather than the government, to determine farm production and prices. "Future legislation should rely less on government and more on the market to maximize long term opportunities for profit in agriculture and to reduce incentives for overproduction," Eckel told Secretary Block.

He added that since about half of PFA's 23,000 farm family members are dairymen, PFA has particular interest in the dairy provision of the upcoming farm bill. He said PFA believes CCC purchases of surplus dairy products is a "...proven and essential stabilizing mechanism for the dairy industry." But, he added, "never again must we allow the price to be supported at a level that encourages farmers to

produce for an artificial market." PFA favors a system where the price support level would be automatically adjusted according to net CCC purchases.

Concerning commodity price support loan levels, Eckel said PFA favors flexible loan rates which adjust with changes in world market conditions. "We must be competitive in the world market," he said. Target prices should be continued, however, to help farmers adjust to a market oriented farm policy.

Other areas of concern to PFA are the threat of future trade embargoes or export restrictions due to foreign policy restrictions, and unchallenged foreign subsidies on imports. "We believe that free and fair trade should be protected in the 1985 farm bill," Eckel said.

PFA also believes the new four-year farm bill should address fair marketing practices between producers and buyers. "Farmers must be able to join together to obtain a fair price for their product in order for a market-oriented agriculture to function properly," Eckel said.

He recommended that marketing and bargaining legislation: define bargaining units, establish accredited associations to bargain exclusively for all members of the unit, require good faith bargaining, establish minimum requirements and rights for accredited bargaining associations, and set up guidelines for settling bargaining impasses.

Eckel concluded, "The 1985 farm bill is a very complicated bill with

many variables to be considered. All commodities and their support programs are inter-related and changes in one program should be made only after a careful consideration of the impact it will have on all other commodities and their programs.

"Our association believes that we need an agricultural policy which is market-oriented, and that this program should give farmers the ability to bargain fairly with buyers. Producers, processors, agribusiness, the general economy, and consumers all have something to gain from more market-oriented agriculture."

Speaking on behalf of the Dairy Cooperative Coordinating Committee of the Northeast was Clyde E. Rutherford, president of Dairylea Cooperative Inc. Rutherford said that although the Northeast is one of the leading agriculture regions in the nation, it is frequently neglected when public policy discussions, such as the listening session, are set up. "We are very much appreciate this opportunity to be heard," he said.

Saying that political pressures could lead to unworkable and destructive legislative proposals, Rutherford stressed the need to approach the dairy situation "with our attention focused on what is now happening and what is likely to happen in the months and years ahead." He suggested that time be spent on factors relevant to the current situation.

For example, Rutherford cited the decline in CCC purchases during the first five months of this year. Thirty-six percent less butter, 29 percent less cheese and 24 percent less nonfat dry milk were purchased by the CCC this year, comparable to the same months of last year, he said.

"We in the dairy industry have heard that CCC purchases must be reduced by more than a billion dollars quickly," Rutherford said. "We are, in fact, told that the budget for dairy price stabilization is less than one billion dollars.

"It is our hope that the Congress will read the improving trend I

have cited and recognize that the goal will be met. It is our opinion that an ongoing trend is important than any specific figure, high or low."

In considering the writing of the 1985 Farm Bill, Rutherford said that the cooperatives in the Northeast are looking with favor on a program which would: set up a revised dairy parity which reflects current milk production costs and efficiencies; take a serious look at setting up a system to move the support price up and down quickly and automatically; and to examine the milk diversion program as it proceeds to its conclusion on March 31 of next year.

"When we talk about a few farm bill and its dairy provisions, let's bear in mind that we are not dealing with just a relative handful of dairy farmers," Rutherford said. "We are dealing with a critically important contributor to the health of our nation's economy."

Rutherford added that of the 60,000 dairy farms in the nation with 50 cows or more, about 19,000 are in the Northeast.

The Dairy Cooperative Coordinating Committee of the Northeast consists of the following organizations: Agri-Mark Inc., North Andover, Mass.; Cabot Farmers Cooperative Creamery Inc., Cabot, Vt.; Dairylea Cooperative Inc., Syracuse, N.Y.; Green Mountain Federation; Barre, Vt.; Interstate Milk Producers, Southampton, Pa.

Also Massachusetts Cooperative Milk Producers Federation, Dunenburg, Mass.; Lehigh Valley Farmers, Lansdale, Pa.; NEDCO, Syracuse, N.Y.; Northern Farms Cooperative Inc., Montpelier, Vt.; Niagara Milk Cooperative Inc., Niagara Falls, N.Y.; Pennmarva Dairymen's Federation, Arlington, Va.; Producers Dairy Co-op of Nashua, N.H.; St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Vt.; and Upstate Milk Cooperative Inc., LeRoy, N.Y.

Also representing Pennsylvania were Edward McNamara, NEDCO; Charles Krueger, associate dean for research at Penn State; Dick Harwood, Rodale Research; and John C. York, Dairy Foods Consultant of Lewisburg.

## Cornell to unveil exhibit

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — "New York State Agriculture: Foundation for the Future" is the theme of a major Cornell University exhibit which will be unveiled at the 1984 New York State Fair here, Aug. 25 - Sept. 3.

The exhibit is being developed jointly by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Agriculture Experiment Station at Geneva, the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell, and the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell.


Announcement of the exhibit, which will occupy in excess of 10,000 square feet in the Fair's newly designated agriculture and health building, was made at a

news conference on Friday morning (June 22) by officials of the New York State Fair.

In a prepared statement, Kenneth F. Wing, Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, said that Cornell was pleased to be taking on a new and expanded presence at the State Fair.

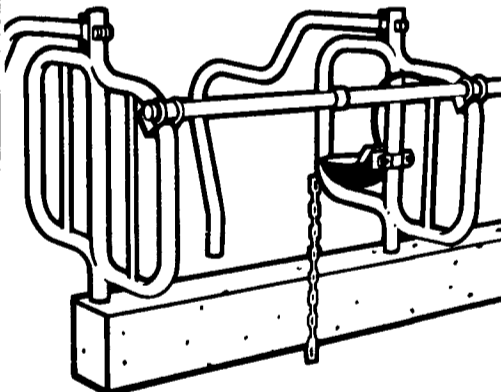
"Our multi-media exhibit will give the public an overview of New York agriculture, including both historical perspectives and portrayals of agriculture today in the Empire State," he said.

Wing noted that agriculture is New York's number one industry, and that the joint displays at the 1984 State Fair would explain the interlocking relationships among the agencies involved and how they serve the people of the State.



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