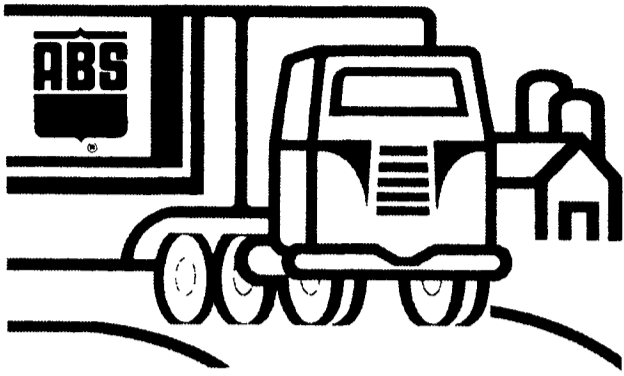


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# The Dairy Business

By  
Newton Bair



**Let's Be Careful,  
It Can Happen  
Here**

The European Economic Community (EEC) has imposed a quota system on the dairy producers of Western Europe. Many of the details of the very restrictive program were reported in the May 25 issue of Hoard's Dairyman. It will pay you to hunt up that issue and read it.

The quota system adopted in Great Britain is based on a farmers 1983 total production minus 9 percent. A heavy penalty is levied on any milk produced beyond his quota. For most farmers, it is high enough to make any surplus very unprofitable.

After a first hand look at some of the European farmers reaction to milk quotas, I am a little fearful that we wouldn't like it any better than they do. I had the opportunity to travel in England, Wales and Scotland in September, and it is very apparent that British farmers are facing some tough times. They don't hesitate to express their feelings publicly.

One farmer placed a billboard in his pasture with this bit of information: "Here is what Milk Quotas have done to this herd of 67 cows—15 cows slaughtered—15 calves unborn—2 men out of work—The bull is unhappy—and the Bank is about to foreclose—".

Dairymen in Britain are particularly hard hit because they have not been paid as well for milk as the French, German and Dutch farmers. The price at the farm last year was about \$9.07 per 100 pounds. With the quota in effect, he is hit with a double whammy. Not only is production reduced, but the price per 100 pounds is now down to \$8.91 in American dollar

equivalent. Inflation in Britain is running about 5.5%, so he is also facing increased costs.

The whole problem stems from the fact that total milk production in Western Europe has reached unmanageable proportions. In 1983, the EEC had a surplus of over 42 million pounds. The trend is much the same as we have experienced here in the US, resulting in fewer dairy farms, but higher production per cow. Some members of the EEC allow trading in quotas, resulting in hardship for the smaller operators and making it extremely hard for a young farmer to get started.

We had better pay close attention to our own situation here in the USA in the next couple of years. While we may find some encouragement in the reduction brought about by the current Dairy Program, there are a lot of heifers waiting in the wings for the end of the program next March. Washington will be crawling with ideas next year for a new Dairy bill, unless we get our house in order.

As much as we might dislike restrictions on production, there is only one alternative to help bring supply and demand into balance. That is to increase sales and consumption of milk products. It is happening to a small degree, but it will take more initiative on our part to increase sales.

We hope that production quotas won't be a part of the next Dairy bill, but you can rest assured that all of us must be more sensitive to the marketing of our product. We are competing with the rest of the world, and may have to play the game by some of their rules, whether we like it or not.

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