

Bureau's dairy measures tie prices to market average

PARK RIDGE, Ill. — Milk production is poised to skyrocket unless sensible farm programs encourage dairymen to make supplies meet demand, according to the nation's largest farm organization.

Hollis Hatfield, American Farm Bureau dairy director, said purchases are running above a year ago levels and "any government legislation offering financial incentive to produce without respect for market demand will open the floodgates."

The dairy specialist said there are more young cows ready to begin milking on farms now than

any time since 1965. The 290,000 drop in cow numbers on January 1, from a year earlier was largely offset by an increase of 225,000 in dairy replacements. "In addition to the high number of replacement heifers available, dairymen are ready to feed higher-quality rations to increase milk production if federal programs continue to offer to buy all the milk that the market does not absorb."

Farm Bureau's dairy program proposal, contained in S908 and HR1965, sets the support price at 90 percent of the average all milk price of the previous three years, with adjustments made semi-

annually based on the amount of net government purchases. The Secretary of Agriculture may reduce the support price by not more than 3 percent every six months if government purchases remain in excess of eight billion pounds annually.

"The legislation ties the support price to the level of government purchases, sending a clear signal to the dairy industry that prices will be adjusted if supply and demand are out of balance. The degree of adjustment will be limited to avoid abrupt financial shifts for dairy producers," Hatfield said.

"Farm Bureau's proposal is directed at controlling supply imbalances" which have been fostered by previous farm programs," he said.

The Farm Bureau is opposing efforts to create new diversion programs and to establish assessments on producers to pay for a diversion program plus the cost of CCC purchases in excess of five billion pounds. Hatfield said previous diversion programs did not solve the dairy industry's problems. "We oppose any new diversion programs because they don't work and they create

regional milk price inequities. Dairymen do not want an assessment program because it shifts the cost of the program from the government to producers, hiding the true cost of the dairy support program from consumers and taxpayers."



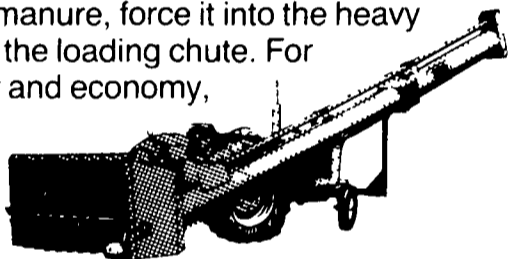
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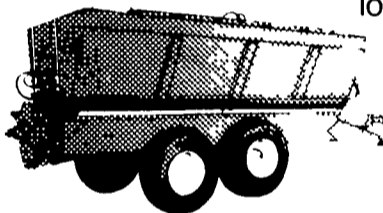
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