

Committee to finish Farm Bill next week?

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effect, topped eight billion pounds. That figure, however, was a distinct improvement over the previous year's 16 billion pounds, and even looks good compared to this year's anticipated 10 billion pound total.

Block attacked the NMPF proposal as being a "major step backward," in that it also devises a complicated formula to link dairy support prices to cost-of-production increases.

The Reagan Administration believes that market forces are the only means to drive the excess capacity and resources out of the dairy industry.

It hopes to end the price support program in relatively quick order, by dropping support prices enough that market forces will bring supply and demand into better balance.

The Administration has been supported by the American Farm Bureau Federation, which is also urging a more market-oriented approach to all of the price support programs, including dairy.

The Farm Bureau advocates a relatively simple approach that ties support prices to the level of government purchases, with limits on support reductions to avoid abrupt dislocations in the industry.

Congress, meanwhile, seems to be following an independent path, apparently listening to the many experts inside and outside the government who have urged caution in cutting the support prices too rapidly.

Both House and Senate committees traditionally are impressed when an industry manages to rally around a single proposal,

as the dairy industry has done with the NMPF proposal.

The admittedly fragile unity represented by the NMPF plan, apparently was purchased with significant increases in the Class I differentials, which the NMPF bill would establish by legislative action.

The legislated increases in Class

I differentials are seen as a concession to Dairymen, Inc., which had resisted a diversion program.

Dairymen, which had requested increases in Class I differentials in the Southeast, had to truck milk into that region in order to fulfill its contracts, during the recently ended paid diversion program.

The co-op, the country's third

largest, represented the interests of producers in areas like the Northeast and Southeast, where supply and demand are in closer balance. Most of the program cost increases, it is felt, result from unrestrained production in other areas of the country.

The Senate, meanwhile, is plodding along on its own course,

with no end in sight, according to a Senate Ag Committee spokesman.

"We're on the verge of making progress," he joked. When asked if he thought the Senate could respond to titles and proposals approved by the House committee, he added, "We're having enough difficulty working with our own proposals."

Vesicular stomatitis confused with hoof-and-mouth disease

WASHINGTON — Vesicular stomatitis, a viral disease that causes blister-like lesions in cattle, horses, swine, sheep and goats, has been reported on three premises in New Mexico, animal health officials with the U.S. Department of Agriculture said.

"The disease ordinarily is not fatal, but causes weight loss and decreased milk production in dairy cows," said Dr. James W. Glosser, acting administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

A small beef herd located near Albuquerque is known to be in-

fectured with vesicular stomatitis, as is a herd of horses near Los Cruces and a herd of cattle and horses near Truth or Consequences, N. Mex.

"Our concern is that vesicular stomatitis not be confused with foot-and-mouth disease, since both have similar clinical symptoms. We want to be sure that foot-and-mouth does not enter the country unrecognized," Glosser said.

Foot-and-mouth disease is a devastating foreign disease that does not exist in the United States. It can be distinguished from vesicular stomatitis only by laboratory tests.

Vesicular stomatitis is a transitory disease thought to be spread by biting flies or mosquitoes and is usually detected only during summer months.

"All livestock owners should report any vesicular condition to their veterinarians," Glosser said. "Symptoms include blisters on the mouth, tongue, teats, feet and occasionally on other exposed skin areas."

In rare instances, humans can be affected by the virus. However, the disease in humans is limited to flu-like symptoms of the respiratory tract.

The last large outbreak of

vesicular stomatitis occurred in 1983 when animals on more than 600 premises in eight western states were affected by the

disease. During this outbreak it became apparent that movement of exported cattle spread the disease from state to state.

Wheat

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posed. But the price support loan rate would equal only 50 percent of parity and would be available only to those producers planting within their acreage allotment, he said. There would be no domestic or export certificate program, and no land diversion.

According to ASCS, the last wheat referendum was held in 1963, with farmers rejecting marketing quotas at that time.

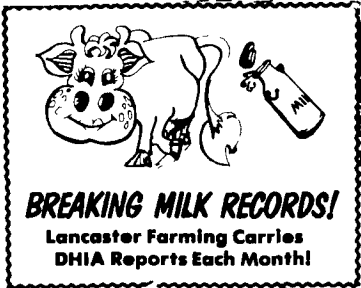
"I don't think a referendum will occur," predicted Weber, adding that Congress seems ready to take some "meaningful action" on the farm bill.

But regardless of what "meaningful action" is taken, the outlook for wheat farmers can only be described as bleak, says Weber, noting that the burgeoning wheat supply is a result of overproduction and a flagging export market. "We're expecting 1985-86 exports to be 1.2 billion bushels, down from a high of 1.8 billion in 1981-82," he

says. Carry-overs are expected to reach an all-time record of 1.6 billion bushels by next June, Weber says.

Extension agricultural economist Louis Moore concurs. "I think it's going to get worse before it gets better," he says, adding that Argentina, Brazil and Canada are still encouraging growers to expand their production. "No one except the U.S. has even talked about making a concerted effort to cut production."

Randy Weber predicts that regulations hammered out in Farm Bill '85 will include lower loan rates and "a move toward a more market-oriented type of agriculture." The new regulations will probably contain a "strong export section" and provide for acreage adjustment authority. And a conservation program will no doubt be included, in order to take 20 to 30 million acres of lower quality cropland out of production, he said.



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