

Dairyman shares thoughts

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this kind of buyout would be worth. That's why you had a tremendous difference in the bidding figures — from a couple dollars to a thousand dollars. There were no guidelines, no hints. You had to start from your side and make a financial estimate of things. For me it was a matter of looking five years down the road to determine if I was better off to stay in the dairy business or participate in the buyout.

NEWSWANGER - Are you saying that the person who made the bid was the one who took the chance?

MYER - That's right. If you really wanted to participate in the program you didn't want to make your bid too high. On the other hand you didn't want to make it too low and lose a lot of what you could have received. What I did was try to think in terms of the number of dairymen that the government wanted to go out of business and the estimated amount of milk they wanted to go out of production. I did a fair amount of calling around the country talking to extension agents and agricultural leaders to try to get a feel from different parts of the country. I tried to find out what

was the expected level of participation. Nobody knew for sure. But it gave me an indication of what I might receive.

On the other hand, you didn't know if the government was going to put a top lid on the bidding or maybe open it up a second time for dairymen to make a bid. The rules of the plan were shared and you could learn what those rules said. But you didn't know what the government was thinking about the value of the bid.

NEWSWANGER - Was there, in your thinking, ethical or moral considerations involved or was this just good business?

MYER - For me, all decisions have moral and ethical implications. And certainly to discontinue the dairy business was a major decision. Yes, I did have quite a bit of reservation about participating in a government program whereby you get paid something that appears to be for nothing. I'm basically opposed to that system of ethics for government. But in this case the reason I was willing to participate was that we know it's costing the government in the area of \$17 per hundred pounds to buy up the surplus milk, store and dispose of it. The

government wanted dairymen to participate so they could dry up five years of production. On the surface it looked like a hand out, but the government saves a lot of money in the end. It was designed to help and not hurt, so I thought ethically and morally it was OK.

NEWSWANGER - Would you explain how the program is funded? Many people seem to not understand where the money comes from to pay for the program.

MYER - I don't have the percentages clearly in mind but at least initially 40 cents per hundred weight is to come off the price of milk to provide a portion of the money to pay for the program. Of course the government is already funding the milk support price program with billions of dollars each year. Some of the money saved from this program will go into the buyout plan. According to some sources, very little extra money will be needed.

NEWSWANGER - Do you think you are being well paid for your herd? Could you have been paid better?

MYER - There is no way I could have dispersed the herd any other

way and got the equivalent. Of course, the restrictions on the farm property for the next five years decreases the value of the farm. But animal for animal, there is no way I could have dispersed the herd for an equal payment.

NEWSWANGER - I know you have some reservations about how this program has been reported in the mass media and to the general public. Would you care to comment on this?

MYER - I thought it was unfortunate that all the dollar facts and figures should be shared with the general public because many of the people can understand dollar values but don't understand the rest of the program. If the public reads information about farmers who receive thousands of dollars, it appears as a free handout without giving the details of the costs that are involved. It gives an incorrect impression. One factor that should be known is that we must beef an animal no matter how good of a milk cow she may be. We have a cow milking 113 pounds of milk per day and another milking 111 pounds. They're top dairy cows. But they will be sold for hamburger now. In addition, your facilities designed for producing milk must be idle. What do you do with the dairy barn and equipment?

NEWSWANGER - Is there any sentimental attachment involved

with your cows?

MYER - Any dairyman knows that if you like dairying you get attached to your animals. You see the bloodlines develop in cow families for three or four generations. Even calves have sentimental value. All these animals must go for slaughter now.

NEWSWANGER - In your opinion would some other program have been better than a whole herd buyout?

MYER - I think a program that would have limited increases in production fairly on every farm would have taken care of the surplus milk in a matter of time. If that didn't do it, allowing the price of milk to be lowered to meet a true supply and demand situation, would have taken care of the problem.

NEWSWANGER - Will the buyout program achieve its purpose?

MYER - No, I don't think so. That's why I was interested in it. My feeling is that without a cap on the production and without limiting the import of dairy cattle, the program will not work.

NEWSWANGER - Would you do it again if you had known before you made your bid what you know now?

MYER - Yes. I don't regret being in it. I do regret the way some of the publicity was handled.



N.H. LB 620, 535 Hrs.



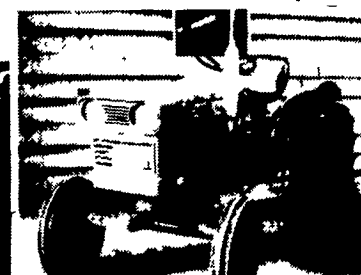
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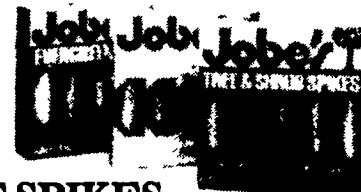
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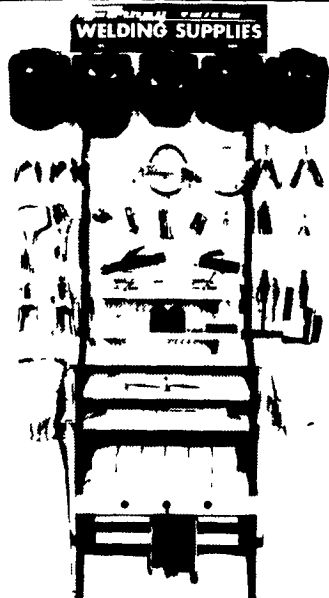
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