

The Dairy Business Newton Bair

The business of farming usually presents us with some alternatives when a decision must be made. A choice of sires and AI studs, several veterinarians on call, feed mills, dealers, and even banks, all clutter up the farm driveway competing for our attention and business. Some of us are even lucky enough to have more than one dairy co-op after our milk, usually at the price set by Federal Orders.

Well, choices are not so hard to make when the range is from excellent to pretty good. But when the choices range from risky to downright disaster, they are not so easy. The really tough choice is when it is an all-or-nothing one.

The one that is facing every dairy farmer right now is whether to go along with the Regional Cooperative Marketing movement that is gaining momentum in New England, New York, and eastern Pennsylvania.

For nearly a year now, producers from Maryland to Maine have been whipping together a plan for what is called 'over-order pricing' of milk. The movement has recently gained momentum in the northeast, with the advent of the Mid-Atlantic Milk Marketing Agency, comprised of Order 4 cooperatives. When the merger is complete, it will have the power and impact of the entire Federal Order system in the Northeast, from Order 1 in New England, Order 2 in New York, and Order 4 in Pennsylvania and nearby sections. Some sections of Order 2 producers have yet to make up their mind to cooperate.

This movement is not merely an attempt to out-guess or out-fox the Federal pricing system. It can be a legal and united effort to gain a more equitable price for our valuable product when the demand for the product increases, rather than accept whatever is offered by an arbitrary formula for pricing.

With an all-or-nothing approach, meaning that all the producers are

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The Way...

But A Lot Less

To Pay"

represented on the negotiating board, not just some of the more aggressive leaders, negotiations are bound to bring results. I believe that it is one case where the only choice may be between hanging together, or hanging

separately.

We may be seeing a perfect example of what should be cooperation between Cooperatives in the Northeast. The Grange, Pennsylvania Farmers Association, and The Pennsylvania Farmers Union have all endorsed the idea and are appointing representatives to the state steering committee.

County committees will be appointed to share representation and ideas. The very survival and continuation of a prosperous and viable industry may be at sake. The era of complete independence for an individual dairyman is nearly over. Single-minded selfreliance is a blessed attribute for the one who can afford it, but when we are all competing against our neighbor, it can bring disaster for

The basic idea of over-order pricing is to promote the orderly control of milk supplies in times of peak demand. Milk handlers are highly in favor of balancing the supply of milk between peaks and valleys of supply and demand. It's the only way they can justify the extra expense of maintaining full processing capacity. Closed plants or unused equipment and labor do not make money for either the independent processors or farmer owned cooperatives.

This may be one time that you as an independent farmer can become an important link in the solid chain of events that will weld the dairy industry together into a prosperous whole. Read the "Milk Market News" column in last weeks Lancaster Farming. Check the details with your milk handler or farm organization and then help to make it an ALL for one choice. The only alternative may be an allfor-nothing choice.

HPI Seeks Aid For Cameroon Farmers

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. James DeVries, African Director for Heifer Project International, the U.S. based, nonprofit development organization, has announced that he is studying ways to provide assistance to displaced farmers from the Cameroon Lake Nyos tragedy in restocking badly needed livestock. HPI's base of operations in Cameroon is located at Bamenda. only 40 minutes from the disaster

Reports coming out of Cameroon from HPI representatives estimated that as many as 1,700 people and 10,000 cattle, goats and sheep died when poisonous gases poured from the volcanic lake and enveloped the pastoral countryside. HPI's Cameroon representative, Charles Talbott is

Cut Feed

Costs

corn will soon be here,

and this is a good time to

focus on cutting feed

costs. One way to do this

is to add anhydrous

ammonia to corn silage

excellent preservative,

ammonia is also one of

the most economical

sources of protein for

the cow. Applied at the

rate of seven pounds per

ton, it can elevate the

protein content of 65

percent moist silage

from 8 percent up to a

level of about 13 per-

Anhydrous ammonia

is a non-protein nitrogen

which cows can convert

to protein. Corn silage

and hay crop forages

normally contain some

NPN, and the rumen

microflora need a

source of readily

available nitrogen such

as NPN or highly

However, excess levels

Thus, ammonia must

be applied uniformly

and at the proper rate.

Moisture content of the

silage should be bet-

ween 60 percent and 70

percent. Cows should be

acclimated to treated

silage gradually over a

period of two to three

weeks. Rations must be

balanced properly.

can be toxic to the cow.

protein.

soluble

cent.

In addition to being an

at time of ensiling.

The time to ensile

currently working with the Cameroon Ministry of Livestock and the Provincial Governor's Office to conduct a census of animal losses by people who survived the disaster.

According to Talbott, "Right now it looks as if 2,000 to 3,000 farmers and pastoralists, people who totally live off grazing livestock, will be displaced from the Nyos area because of the danger of recurrent gas releases. For most farmers, their livestock represent their life savings and these farmers have lost all of their livestock."

With an average annual income of only \$720 per family, the majority of farmers would never have the resources to replace their livestock, but without them they have no hope of being self supporting. A native cow in Cameroon costs the equivalent of about \$200 U.S. while sheep and goats cost \$50 each. Farmers usually tend herds which have been perpetually handed down through family lines for generations. When disaster strikes a single farmer, relatives and friends usually help by providing seed stock. In the Lake Nyos situation, this kind of help is impossible.

Heifer Project International has worked in Cameroon for 10 years setting up small animal livestock programs with poor farmers. Working with local organizations, HPI has also been instrumental in establishing an animal research station near Bamenda and distributing livestock to poor farmers in that area.

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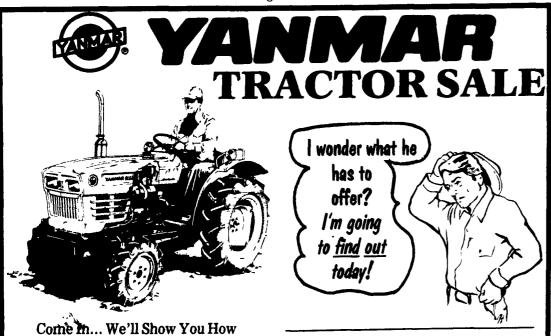
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