

Eastern Milk Co-op

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Donovan said that the dairy diversion program, followed by the more recent whole herd buy-out, forced a shift from surplus to shortage in the Northeast in the past two and a half years. In 1986 alone, the Northeast suffered a net loss of 2,500 dairy farmers.

Eastern and other Northeast co-ops, Donovan said, are facing a new challenge today -- a challenge just the opposite of the one Eastern faced several years ago when it entered into a joint venture with cheese-maker Leprino Foods and opened the largest mozzarella plant in the Eastern United States. During times of surplus, the plant helped balance milk supplies in New York and Pennsylvania, annually absorbing 700 million pounds of milk and producing 70 million pounds of cheese for the pizza and restaurant industries.

Now, Donovan said, the co-op is faced with the challenge of reducing contractual commitments to consumers. The co-op also at certain times has bought outside supplies of milk to meet contracts, which impacted directly on profitability, he said.

Forwood explained that Eastern, as a co-op, is essentially a marketing arm for its members. It guarantees that members will get paid for the milk they produce, he said.

Eastern recorded milk-related sales of \$298.6 million for fiscal '87, which ended March 31, and sales of \$72.9 million for the first quarter of the 1988 fiscal year (April-June, 1987). Most of that money was passed on to the farmers to pay for the milk they produced -- an amount of milk equivalent to more than 1.1 billion quarts in fiscal '87. Proceeds for the co-op amounted to \$233,000 for fiscal '87 and \$24,000 for the first quar-

ter in fiscal '88.

The 1986 fiscal year saw proceeds of \$631,000, sales of \$323.6 million, and the handling of the equivalent of 1.3 billion quarts of milk.

Sales continued at record levels for Eastern's Products Division, which operates a chain of dairy stores and a truck route delivery system serving rural communities in 11 states. The division, which opened two new stores in fiscal '87, posted sales of \$7.5 million, up from \$7 million for the year before.

At Eastern's annual banquet Tuesday evening Karl and Constance Haslauer, Munnsville, N.Y., were named Eastern's Quality Farmer of the Year for 1987.

At the same time, the cooperative announced top quality farmers for New England and for the Pennsylvania and South region -- Shelburne Farms of Shelburne, VT, and Richard and Sheryl Groover of Canton, respectively.

Eastern also named John G. Maroney Sr. of Montgomery, NY, as its Field Representative of the Year for outstanding service to farmers, and presented its annual Agricultural Press Award to Everett Newswanger, managing editor of Lancaster Farming for outstanding reporting.

The banquet attracted between 500 and 600 farmers, dairy industry officials, and various government and political figures. The main speaker was Bucky Jones, four-time recipient of the Mississippi Master Farmer Award.

Cleanliness has become a hallmark for the Haslausers, going back to Karl's father and his father's father.

"I've known this dairy since 1965," Eastern's Quality Assurance Manager Ken Slentz noted. "They've always produced good

quality milk."

The Haslauer dairy has a brand new pipeline system (installed in July), a herd of 62 milkers, and some 20 head of young stock.

Karl's parents, Ernest and Genevieve, are retired Eastern members who still help out on the farm. Karl says his three daughters (Laurel, 16; Lisa, 15; and Julie, 11) are a big help, too, handling everything from unloading hay to feeding the cows and calves. The Haslausers also have a 22-month-old son, Andrew.

"Eastern already had been paying premiums for quality milk, so this year we took the next logical step and started a quality awards program," Slentz said. "The program honors members who produce quality milk all year long."

Eastern's computer system made it possible to track down all the producers meeting the standards for this new quality recognition program. The result: Over 300 farms consistently met the standards, and will be receiving Certificates of Quality Achievement.

The computer also selected the top 10 quality producers who will receive special plaques. Out of the top 10, the computer also tapped the top quality producers for New England, New York, and the Pennsylvania and South region, and from those three, the Haslausers were chosen the 1987 Quality Farmers of the Year.

Other top ten Quality Farmers include: JR and Linda Allen, Dundee, NY; John and Helen Brown, Forksville; Kraham Bros., Cooperstown, NY; Mark Longacre, Susquehanna; Arnold and Sandra Rock, Worcester, NY; Hugh Rutherford, Walton, NY; and Richard and Joanne Tice,



At the Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative annual meeting (L to R) Michael Donovan, general manager; Everett Newswanger, recipient of Ag Journalism of the Year Award and Earl Forwood, president.

Troy, PA.

Eastern, with 3,700 member farmers in nine states, owns cheese plants in Horseheads and Waverly,

NY; and operates stores in Fulton and Newark, NY, and Canton, Troy, Washingtonville and Wellsboro, PA.

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of professional dedication to the agricultural community and the dairy industry in particular.

In accepting the award, Newswanger expressed his desire to be part of the solution to the farm problem rather than to be part of it. "If this award," Newswanger said, "indicates in a small measure some success in this heartfelt desire then I gratefully and humbly accept it in that light--quickly recognizing the need for wisdom from above to live up to the standards set before me by this award."

In a separate event the next day, for the second year in a row, Newswanger won the Photo Journalism Award presented by the Northeast Farm Communicators Association. The work was judged best in class in the Northeast Farm Communicator's Annual Journalism contest. The organization of farm writers, editors, radio commentators and public relations persons announced the results of the contest at their annual meeting held in conjunction with the Eastern Milk Producers meeting.

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