

# Lancaster Farming

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Three Sections

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## RCMA, Best Hope For Local Dairymen Facing Major Price Cuts

BY KARL BERGER  
Special Correspondent

FREDERICK, MD. — It still isn't working the way its supporters intended, but the Regional Cooperative Marketing Agency has emerged as the best hope of area dairymen facing the near certainty of major price cuts in 1988, according to area dairy leaders ranging from Vermont congressman James Jeffords to Lancaster County Extension agent Glenn Shirk.

The failure of efforts to avoid or delay the 50-cent support price cut Secretary of Agriculture Richard

Lyng is expected to levy Jan. 1 has refocused attention on over-order pricing. In Federal Order 4, the Middle Atlantic Cooperative Milk Marketing Agency has been relatively successful in setting prices above the minimum required by federal regulators and passing along the premiums to producers. RCMA, which operates primarily in federal orders 1 and 2, has been somewhat less successful, according to industry sources.

The two agencies are linked by the intermingling of milk supplies between orders 2 and 4. Although MACMMA officials have said they can continue charging premiums if RCMA's efforts break down, they acknowledge that RCMA's lack of effectiveness to date sets a limit on the prices they charge.

Payments Ed Anna, RCMA's executive director, preferred to focus on the positive in a telephone interview last week, noting that the

agency paid its first premiums to member farmers several weeks ago.

"It was a while in coming," he said, "but I think everyone connected with RCMA recognizes the significance of those first checks. We have kept our commitment to our farmer members."

The payments, for milk that had been shipped in September, totalled \$2.5 million to about 22,000 producers in New York, New England, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware. New England dairymen received about \$1.7 million of this total; their premium amounted to 37 cents a hundredweight, Anna said. Producers in the other five states, where RCMA support is less complete, received the remainder; their premium varied from a low of nine cents to a high of 24 cents.

The latter totals in particular have struck some observers as paltry compared to RCMA's

announced premium of 73 cents that month, but, Anna said, few dairymen recognize the reasons for the difference.

Like MACMMA, RCMA limits its ever-order bargaining efforts to Class I milk used for fluid sales.

The prices paid by handlers are pooled, however, so that all RCMA members, at least in the same order, share more or less equally in the proceeds. Balance less than half of the Order 2 milk

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## Suit Filed Against Milk Dealers

SYRACUSE, N.Y.— RCMA who represents dairy farmers in 11 northeastern states filed a lawsuit here Friday (Dec. 18) against four milk dealers for failing to comply with an over-order pricing system. The Regional Cooperative Marketing Agency Inc. (RCMA) said it was taking the action to recover money and enable it to pay premiums to its 22,000 members.

"In the cases of Farmland, Boice, Sunnysdale and Mohawk, we have reached a point where negotiations have generated no results. Farmers are tired of double-talk. All we want for our members is what they deserve."

fair price for milk," said William Zuber, president of RCMA.

The suits filed in New York State Supreme Court name Farmland Dairies Inc. of Wallington, N.J., Boice Brothers Dairy Inc. of Kingston, N.Y., Sunnysdale Farms Inc. of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Mohawk Dairy of Amsterdam, N.Y., as having tried to undermine RCMA by either failing to pay the Class 1 differential due RCMA on members milk or by failing to provide data on individual farmer shipments of milk, thus preventing RCMA from issuing pooled premium checks to its members.

**Editor's Note:**  
Due to the holiday, many markets were closed this week and others were not reported. All markets available to Lancaster Farming are included in our usual A Section market pages.

## Farmer Who Learns To Read Featured On National T.V.

BY BARBARA MILLER  
Lycoming Co. Correspondent

DANVILLE — "If that farmer can learn how to read, so can I," remarked a student recently when embarking on an adult literacy course.

Statements such as the above are music to the ears of "that farmer," Neil Wertz, a successful 40-year-old hog and grain farmer currently

being featured on national television as December Learner of the Month by Project Literacy United States (PLUS).

Neil and his brother, Leon, farm 500 acres raising feed for their modern 1100 pig farrow to finish operation.

Three years ago Neil enrolled in a local adult literacy program,

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## From The Staff

# Season's Greetings

At Lancaster Farming



Neil Wertz with family reading to Alan, youngest. Family members left to right - Jennifer, wife Susan, Neil with Alan, and Gerald in front.

## Seedsman's Association Appoints Executive Director

BY LISA RISSER

LANCASTER — Members of the Pennsylvania Seedsman's Association unanimously voted Elmer Appelgate to the newly created position of executive director. Appelgate, who has been in the seed industry for 52 years, will assist the association president in carrying out his duties. Appelgate also was made an honorary member of the organization.

Appelgate recently retired from Hoffman Seeds after 23 years with the company. Prior to that he was employed by Seaboard Seed Com-

pany of Philadelphia. During these years, he had been involved with the Pennsylvania and New York Seedsman's Associations, the Pennsylvania Foundation Co-op, and the American Seed Trade Association.

Members also voted former vice president, Frank Welch, to the association's president's office; Dennis Shoop is vice president; and Fred Lepley remains secretary-treasurer.

In other business, Robert Kalton reported for the Farm Seed Com-

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## Holiday Deadlines

The office of Lancaster Farming will close for the holiday at 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31 and will reopen at 8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 4. Deadlines for the Dec. 31 issue are as follows:

- Mailbox Market Ads - Noon Monday.
- Public Sales Ads - Noon Monday.
- General News - 5 p.m. Monday.
- Classified Section B Ads - 5 p.m. Monday.
- All Other Classified Ads - 9 a.m. Tuesday.
- Late-breaking News - 5 p.m. Tuesday.

## Here's The Way We Heard It

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and several farmers from the Keystone State have created a "Reindeer Rest Area" in Harrisburg. The special feeding station will be available to travelling reindeer Christmas Eve in the parking lot of the State Farm Show Complex on Cameron Street. Hungry sleigh-pullers will find hay, corn, water, and a quiet place to rest between special deliveries.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Boyd E. Wolff indicates

the idea came from Pennsylvania farmers and he applauded the effort, "Once again the people who provide our food have demonstrated their commitment to putting nourishment where it's needed."

"The Farm Show Parking lot is a perfect place for fast feeding of hungry world travellers in a hurry," said Wolff, "The location provides a secluded Christmas Eve rest stop and offers safe landing approaches from the north without interfering with other air traffic in the Harrisburg area."