

Lancaster Farming

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Beef Referendum Passes National Vote: Beef Council Tally

BY LISA RISSER

LITITZ (Lancaster) — Beef and dairy farmers from around the nation have voted overwhelmingly in favor of the beef checkoff, according to an unofficial tally by the National Beef Council and the Beef Checkoff Campaign Committee.

"I don't think there's any question that it passed," commented Robert Coleman, executive director of the Pennsylvania Beef Council. "There is just no official numbers out yet. Pennsylvania was questionable because of some opposition, but by our unofficial count, 63 percent of the producers voted 'yes'. If we had this many (counties) passing, then there's no doubt of its passing in more positive states."

Coleman and the other council staff members called 40 of the state's 67 county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices. They found that approximately two-thirds of the state's dairy and beef farmers voted for the referendum.

"Unofficially, in all but one state, voters were in favor of the referendum," said Don Ricketts, coordinator of the Beef Checkoff Campaign Committee. "That state wasn't in the New England or Mid-Atlantic regions. Our tally also doesn't include Alaska—nothing has come out of that state."

In Lancaster County, however, the results were quite different. Of the 540 eligible votes, 370 were against the referendum, reported Ray Brubaker at the county ASCS office. Two additional votes were challenged, and the voters found ineligible.

"There will be an influx of funds available for research, promotion, and consumer education now," said Dr. John Comerford, Penn

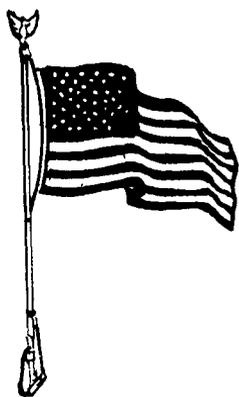
State beef specialist. "We at the universities have the facilities and personnel to do the research and educational programs." Comerford hopes to see the funds allocated to universities.

The funds, which haven't been allocated yet, will help finance research on the production of new markets, methods of beef preparation, and genetics.

One beef producer not too pleased with the predicted outcome is Robert L. Frame, owner of Vintage Sales Stable in Paradise. "If it passed, it passed. But how do we know how honest it was?" he questioned. Of particular concern to him was the treatment of the absentee ballots, which were complicated to get and many of which in this county were counted as ineligible because they lacked signatures or were received late.

"I'm never going to change my mind on it for as long as I live," claimed Frame. "They're not out of the woods yet on this because we're still in court on it," he added, referring to his refusal to collect checkoff funds last year. "We're going to court in Philadelphia, and

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A happy and safe Memorial Day Weekend to everyone!



Until Thursday the weather around this part of the country was better for ducks than farming. Willis Rohrer, Smoke-town, took this picture of a mallard mother and babies that were hatched behind his house by the patio. The drake stayed in the grass field nearby and came to get Mrs. Duck every evening and they went out to dinner together.



Farming went into full gear late this week as fields started to dry after the long period of rainy weather. By late Thursday evening some fields in Lancaster County still had visible wet spots, but other soils dried more rapidly. As the sun went down late Thursday evening, this farmer was working the field with horses and had begun to plant tobacco.

Photo by Everett Newswanger.

Dairy Industry Versus Dairy Farmers Cooperatives Split On Pricing Proposals

BY PAT PURCELL

LITITZ (Lancaster) — If the Penn Marva Dairymen Federation has its way, milk producers in the northeastern part of the nation will get more money for their product. By proposing a Class III designation, the federation hopes to move certain products out of the present Class II, into an intermediate class and gain an additional 10 cents per hundredweight above present Class II prices. However, the proposed pricing plan would not oper-

ate under the same criteria in use in other Federal Order areas.

"In terms of volume of milk to be included in Class II under our proposal, the amount is substantial and it would mean more money for our producers," said Jim Fraher, Economist with Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, members of PMDF

However, that proposal will meet with some opposition from Eastern Milk Producers and the New England Cooperative. While they are not opposed to the crea-

tion of an additional class, they are opposed to the Federation's proposed classification guidelines.

The proposals will be brought before the USDA during hearings scheduled tentatively for sometime in June. The outcome would affect the Federal Orders in the Northeast. Federal Orders in much of the nation utilize a three-class pricing system, but in the Northeast there are only two pricing classes. Class I is the high priced

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National Milk Federation Launches Campaign To Stop Price Cut

By Karl Berger

Special Correspondent

The National Milk Producers Federation, the Washington-based lobbyist for most of the nation's dairy cooperatives, has already begun an effort to avert the possibility of another 50-cent reduction in the federal government's dairy support price.

Federation chief executive James Barr and president Tom Camerlo, a Colorado dairy farmer, announced the "Stop the Price Cut" campaign at a May 9 press conference in Washington. The federation is enlisting the support of its member cooperatives and their producers in a "grassroots" lobbying effort targeted at Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng.

The Council of Northeast Farmer Cooperatives, which represents six New York and New England-based organizations, and Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, the major Federal Order 4 producer group, already have announced

support for the idea of averting the 50-cent cut. However, they may wind up differing from National Milk in the exact means they advocate to accomplish this.

With milk production rising in at least some parts of the country, a national campaign may be the only way for dairy farmers to avoid another round of the falling prices that have befallen them since Lyng implemented a 50-cent support

price reduction January 1.

Under the provisions of the 1985 farm bill, the Secretary is required to cut the support price 50 cents at the beginning of each year if, as now seems likely for 1989, U. S. Department of Agriculture officials estimate that the government's purchase of surplus dairy stocks will exceed the 5-billion-pound level. A similar mechanism

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RCMA March Premium Set At 17 Cents

BATAVIA, NY — The Regional Cooperative Marketing Agency Inc. recently announced that its 22,000 members will receive a 17-cent premium per hundredweight on all milk produced during March. The premiums paid over the 11-state region covered by RCMA total \$2.34 million for the month.

The 17-cent premium is up two

cents from the amount received by dairy farmers for February milk sales. RCMA has paid more than \$13 million since starting premium payments seven months ago.

According to RCMA President William Zuber, the organization is working to increase the amount paid in premiums to off-set continuing declines in federal order

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