

Farm Calendar

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Friday, September 9
York Inter-State Fair, through September 17.
Thurmont, Emmitsburg Community Show, Catoctin High School, Catoctin, Md., through September 11.
Hay Creek Fall Festival, Joanna Furnace, Morgantown, through September 11.
Saturday, September 10
PA Holstein Championship Show, State College, Ag Arena, 9:00 a.m.
Schaefferstown Horse Parade & Harvest Fair, 10:00 a.m. Runs through Sunday.
Autumn Harvest Hereford Classic, Spring Bottom Farm, Fairfield, 11:00 a.m.
Monday, September 12
Bellwood-Antis Farm Show, Bellwood, runs through September

15.
Claysburg Area Farm Show, Claysburg, runs through September 15.
Green Township Community Fair, Commodore, runs through September 17.
Tuesday, September 13
Wyoming/Lackawanna Holstein Field Day, Wayne & Roger Sherwood's Farm.
Denver Fair, Denver, runs through September 17.
Albion Area Fair, Albion, runs through September 17.
Sinking Valley Community Farm Show, Skelp, runs through September 17.
Wednesday, September 14
Corn & Soybean Field Day, PSU Research Lab, Landisville, 10:00 a.m.
Berlin Brothersvalley Fair, Berlin, runs through September 17.
Williamsburg Community Fair,

FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

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either September 7 or 8. It's a valuable decision that we as pork producers can make which will affect the future of our industry.

If you are a pork producer, please walk over to your calendar

right now and on September 7 or 8, in large letters, write "vote at County Extension Office." Better still, write "vote yes." We need your note.

David A. Reinecker, President
Pa. Pork Producers Council

NEWS FROM

REGIONAL COOPERATIVE
MARKETING AGENCY INC


BATAVIA, N.Y. — In response to the deepening economic crisis threatening dairy farmers in the Northeast, the Regional Cooperative Marketing Agency (RCMA) has launched an aggressive campaign to help bolster falling dairy farm income.

"We will explore every possible way to secure higher over-order prices for our 22,000 dairy-farmer members," according to RCMA President Bill Zuber. "We will

Williamsburg, runs through September 19.

Solanco Fair, runs through September 16.

The Big E Fair, West Springfield, Mass., runs through September 25.

Thursday, September 15
North East Community Fair, North East, runs through September 17.

Oley Valley Community Fair, Oley, runs through September 17.

Friday, September 16
Eastern States Exposition, Springfield, Mass.

soon contact governors, state agriculture commissioners and legislative leaders throughout the Northeast, and encourage them to follow the lead of Vermont, Maine and Pennsylvania, who have already taken steps to counter the tightening cost squeeze that is forcing family farms out of business at an alarming rate."

According to Zuber, "We are an industry at risk. Seven consecutive years of falling milk prices paid to farmers, combined with skyrocketing costs, have left a lot of family farms hanging on by just a thread."

Although RCMA has distributed over \$20 million in added income to its members since last September, RCMA officials say additional help is needed on the state level to keep the Northeast dairy industry alive and healthy.

In New York, for instance, RCMA will be investigating the provisions of the "Rogers-Allen Act" which authorizes a role for the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets in securing higher prices for farmers.

"Agriculture is our single

largest industry," said Zuber. "And in the Northeast, where the dairy business is the largest component of the industry, we lost over 1,400 farms last year alone. And if we allow this crisis to continue, farmers won't be the only ones who lose."

Any income that may result from the recent Federal legislation, said Zuber, will not show up in the dairy farmer's mailbox for almost a year. "There will be a lot of bills due between now and then and many good farms will go under in the meantime."

RCMA officials point to programs already in place in certain states that are reducing the severity of the current crisis for some dairy farmers. Maine, for example, has enacted legislation that requires all milk processors in that state to pay the RCMA Class 1 differential and also uses regulatory authority to further increase dairy farm income.

Vermont is providing some property tax relief and a direct payment to individual dairy farmers provided the farmers take part in a self-help program like RCMA.

The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board has enacted, with RCMA support, a \$1.05 premium on milk produced and sold in the state. This increased income is being paid to farmers depending on how much of their milk is sold as bottled milk.

"When the price of feed increases by 15 percent, it's the same thing as cutting the milk price paid to farmers by 50 cents per hundredweight," said Zuber. "Feed costs have already jumped 25 to 30 percent due to the drought. That's like the price of gasoline jumping 30-cents a gallon overnight."

Other than over-order pricing (a price paid above the minimum set by the federal government), farmers have no way to recover these increased production costs--except in states where appropriate legislation has been enacted.

According to RCMA Executive Director Ed Anna, "Falling milk prices have forced the farmers' income down, while the drought has driven his costs up and the family farm out of business."

Consumers will also lose if relief does not come soon, Anna said. "The drought of 1988 taught us how fragile our food supply really is. If farmers don't have adequate income to remain in business, there will be very little we can do once the industry is gone. Then milk supplies will have to come from other regions of the country at higher costs."

Anna emphasized that action must be taken immediately. "The prospect of record numbers of producers dispersing their herds this winter and spring should scare the daylight's out of our government leaders," Anna said. "In the meantime, RCMA will continue its effort to deliver higher over-order premiums to its members."

Corn Growers Enroll

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For participating in the program, corn growers are eligible for a federal target price guarantee of \$2.93 per bushel on their 1988 crop, and price support loans at a national average rate of \$1.77 per bushel. Those who diverted the additional 10 percent received land diversion payments at a rate of \$1.75 per bushel for corn, Lutz said.

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