

# RCMA Meets With Governor's Advisors

BATAVIA, N.Y.— RCMA President William Zuber with RCMA Attorney David P. O'Hara met Tuesday (Sept. 13) with representatives of Gov. Mario Cuomo's office and Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Donald Butcher regarding New York State's Senate Bill No. 9166, commonly known as the Dairy Farmer's Bill of Rights, which was vetoed Sept. 7 by the Governor.

According to Zuber, "We were

very disappointed by the veto but we accepted the invitation to meet in Albany in order to see if there was any common ground that would produce legislation to protect farmers."

Zuber added, that "Dealers, particularly Farmland, have attempted to convince the Governor and the public that Senate Bill No. 9166 would prevent dealers from paying higher prices to farmers." In fact, said Zuber, "The

exact opposite is true. The dealers want to use cash incentives to cause farmers to resign from RCMA. Once they destroy RCMA they will go back to their old practice of paying no premiums at all."

Syracuse attorney, O'Hara emphasized that "Federal legislation similar to Senate Bill No. 9166 contains the language proprietary dealers have advocated and that statute has been used as sword against farmers. That legis-

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lation was intended to protect farmers and ended up being amended by dealers to defeat its purpose. We want to be sure that opponents of Senate Bill No. 9166 are not able to the same thing here in New York."

"There are basic issues which need to be resolved. First, we don't believe legislation aimed at protecting farmers should be modified to regulate the activities of farmers and farm associations such as RCMA. Secondly, there is a provision in the federal statute which waters down the legislation and the opponents of the bill want it added. We do not want to defeat the purpose of this bill," Zuber added.

Zuber emphasized "That the meeting led to a good faith exchange of ideas which may result in legislation protecting farmers' rights, but there is a great deal of work to do."

Zuber also reviewed current RCMA activities and its efforts on behalf of Northeast dairy farmers:

#### RCMA Membership

RCMA membership continues to grow with 44 new members joining the organization in August. Every new member moves RCMA closer to its goal of higher over-order premiums for all its members.

#### RCMA Class I Differential

The RCMA Board of Directors has set an RCMA Class I Differential of \$.75 per hundredweight for October and November. This

action should result in an October pooled premium of \$.30 per cwt., which is three times higher than the October 1987 premium.

#### Efforts to Increase Dairy Farm Income

A committee of RCMA dairy farmer directors met with representatives from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to explore details of the Rogers-Allen Act. RCMA officials are also in contact with leaders in other states to seek ways to help prove the dairy situation throughout the region.

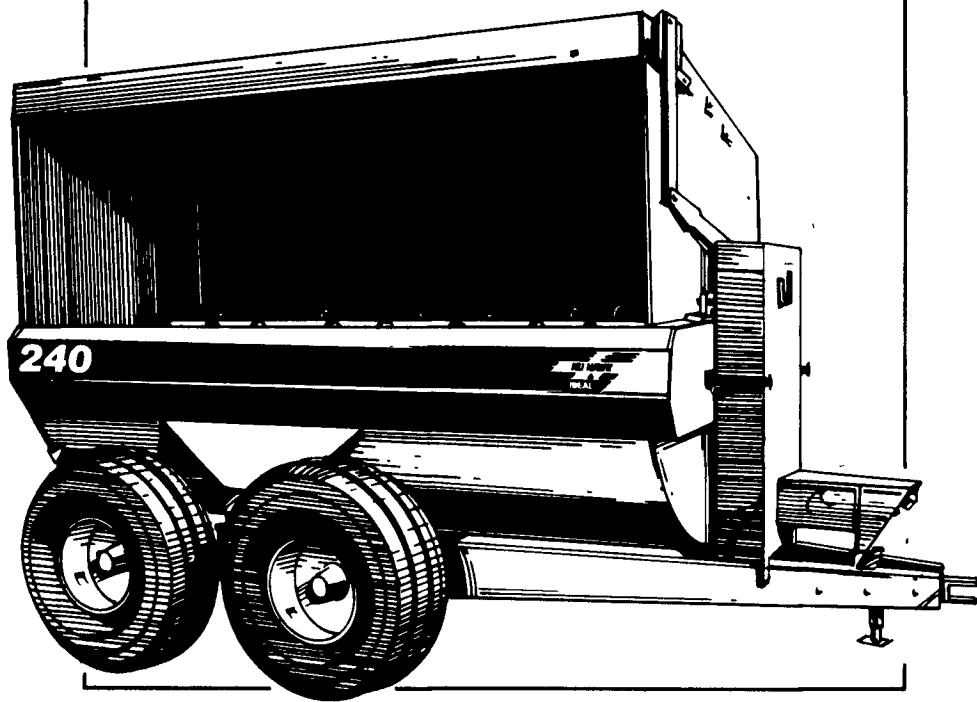
#### Work Begins in Order #36

RCMA will be moving into Order #36 (Western Pennsylvania and S.W. New York) to help producers in that area and to protect the organization's ability to maintain RCMA pricing in Western New York. This action is the result of requests by several producers in that area and the number of new processors that have come into Western New York due to the state removing the licensing laws that once protected Western New York producers.

#### Farmland Dairies

Farmland, by its refusal to pay the RCMA Class I Differential, continues to hold down RCMA premiums paid to all members. However, the list of Farmland shippers who are diverting their milk to handlers who do pay the RCMA Class I price, continues to grow.

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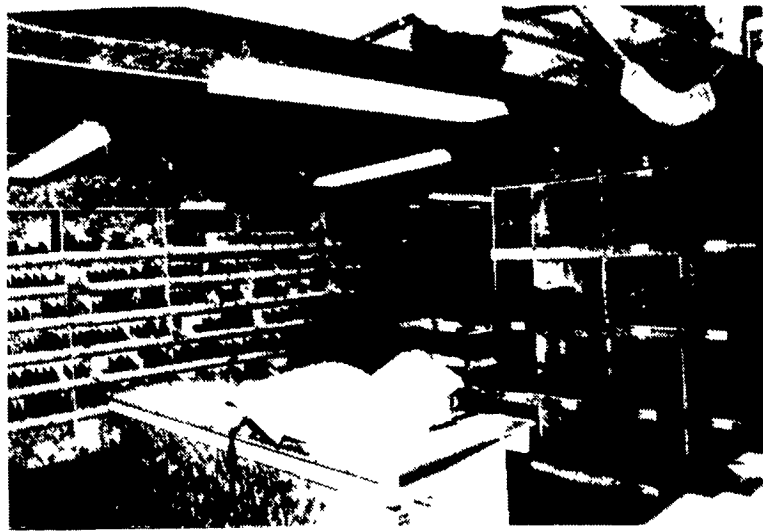
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