

# Leading Dairy Farmers

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Continued budget cuts were the center of the farm bill battle. "We faced a very difficult struggle against a program of three additional price cuts that would have lowered the support price to \$8.60 by 1993. The advocates of that approach were in the driver's seat," Barr commented, "but we fought hard to make sure we changed it." The dairy program got \$2 billion more over the next five years than the budget people wanted to allot. By stopping further price cuts, and establishing a \$10.10 floor, dairy farmers have some measure of protection in the future.

This is a short term battle won. Now is the time to consider new approaches to provide support to



**E (Kika) De La Garza, U.S. Representative, chairman of the house agricultural committee.**

our industry. Camerlo said, "We know our weaknesses; when we are divided we don't have much strength. But it is time to re-learn our strength: what we can achieve when we are working together in unison, in harmony."

Again next year, the dairy industry will offer input to USDA to study dairy program alternatives that could deal with milk surpluses above seven billion pounds.

Barr suggested that Congress could choose from one of three paths to follow - Congress could do nothing, it could adopt some major changes supported by a small part of the industry, or it could agree on program changes advocated by the Milk Producers Federation members.

"We can work through whatever differences we face within the industry and present an agreed upon plan to Congress. It has to be an approach that has minimal impact on the budget. It also has to be an approach that we will truly support, in action as well as word," Camerlo urged. "We must ask our friends in Congress to fight for us, just as they ask us to fight for them," said Camerlo.

"Our goal has to be to build a better organization, to enhance the Federation's ability to improve the economic well-being of dairy farmers and our cooperatives. From that goal, we must not retreat," concluded Camerlo.

Representative E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee said most of us want a balanced budget, "but we say, don't begin with me,

balance it in the other person's backyard."

Commenting on the dairy provisions of the new 1990 Farm Bill, De La Garza said, "I hate assessments. But sometimes, they're the only way to go. Budget pressures force us to choose them." He believes the door is open to adopt an effective supply-management program to enable dairy farmers to avoid a third assessment mandated in the new Farm Bill if CCC purchases are estimated to exceed seven billion pounds and new legislation is not enacted by 1992.

"Politics is the art of the possible. Everything is possible at some point in time."

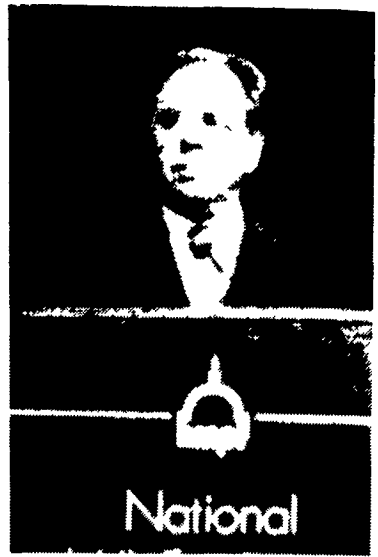
"We might be losing the editorial wars, but we're winning the battles on the floor of Congress," stated de la Garza, a member of the House Agriculture Committee

since 1965 and its Chairman since 1991. He noted the growing margins by which the last three Farm Bills were passed. "We've estab-

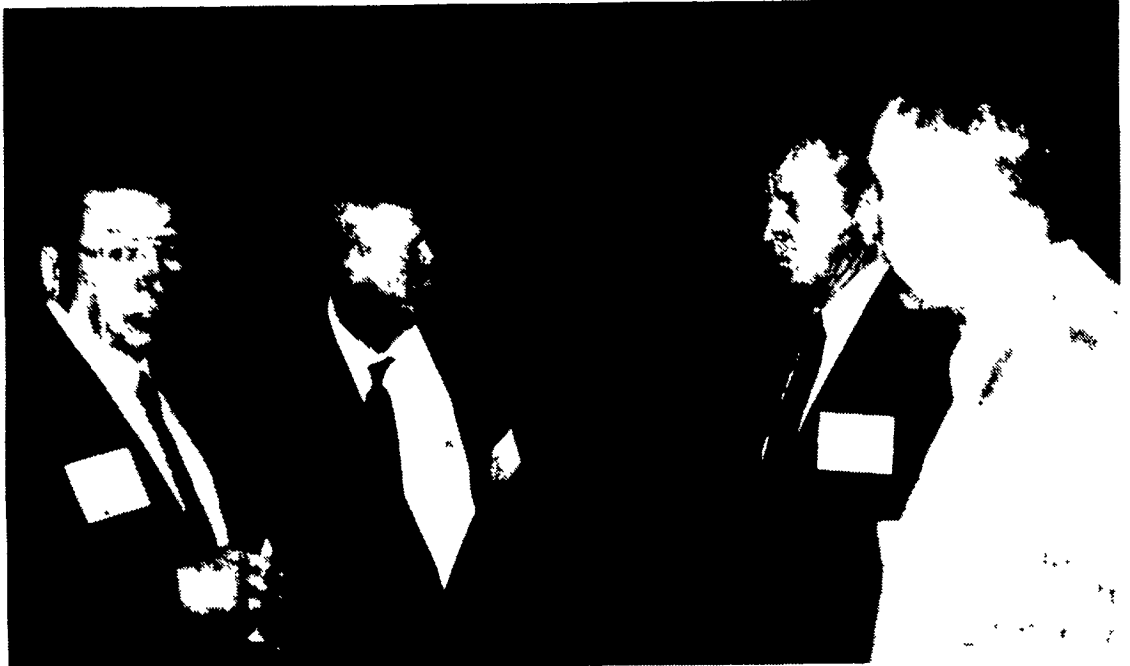
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**James Barr, CEO, NMPF**



**NMPF President, Tom Camerlo, Jr.**



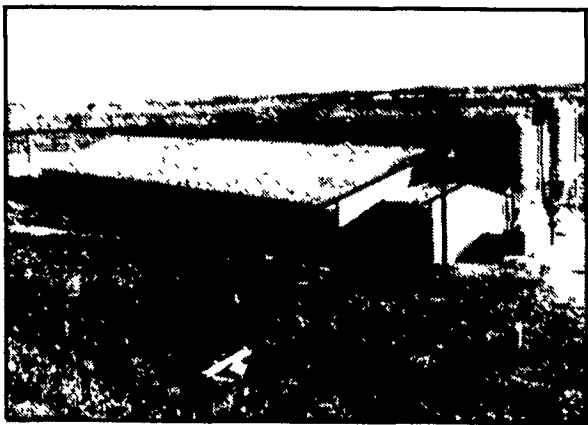
At the NMPF annual meeting in San Diego last week are, left to right, Fred Butler, president, Maryland division of Dairymen, Inc.; and directors of NMPF, Gene Kilby, Peach Bottom; David Patrick, Woodbine, MD; and Harold Martin, Oxford.

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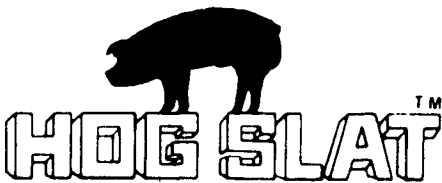
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