Dairylea President Testifies For Government Purchases

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Price support through government purchases is at the heart of any workable dairy program, according to Clyde Rutherford, president of Dairylea Cooperative.

Rutherford, a past chairman of the National Commission on Dairy Policy (NCDP), testified June 18 before the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry.

In his testimony, Rutherford talked about similarities between the commission's recommendations, which were issued in March, and a program by the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) to balance milk production and consumption.

Overall, Rutherford said that the NMPF plan has broad industry support and would achieve most of the goals of the NCDP.

He told the subcommittee that both the recommendations of the NCDP and the NMPF plan indicate that an adequate milk supply is dependent on a minimum federal

In addition, balancing the

support price.

domestic market through purchases of dairy products should be the job of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), and the CCC should maintain reserves for national and international food assistance programs.

Market forces, together with adjustments in the government support price, should be used to balance supply and demand for dairy products, according to the commission's report. It recom-



From left, Clyde Rutherford, president of Dairylea Cooperative Inc., testifies before the U.S. House Ag Committee about national milk market balancing. Also testifying is Fred Douma, chairman of the Dairy Farmers For Responsible Dairy Policy, an organization representing southern California dairymen.

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mends also that the support price should not flucuate by more than 50 cents per hundredweight (cwt.) of milk per year.

Rutherford said that similarly, the NMPF plan calls for an \$11.60 per cwt. support price floor to be established for the remainder of 1991.

The support price would be adjusted each Jan. 1, starting in 1992 and continue through 1995, with the adjustments not exceeding 50 cents per cwt. in any one

In addition, the cost of CCC purchases each year would not exceed five billion pounds of milk equivalent, on a total solids basis.

Assessments would be levied on production to pay for purchases in excess of five billion pounds. Further, there is a two-tier production control program recommended, should estimated purchases exceed seven billion pounds. According to Rutherford, the NMPF plan calls for a producerelected board with the responsibility to fund, manage and market dairy product purchases in excess of five billion pounds.

"Safeguards are built into the NMPF production control plans," Rutherford said. Producers in areas of the nation with high fluid milk utilization would be exempt from some restrictions applied to the industry when CCC purchases exceed seven billion pounds.

And, should a substantial price rise occur, indicating milk is in short supply, the secretary of agriculture can terminate the production control program.

Rutherford said the commission and NMPF support a government policy that would allow milk producers to receive a satisfactory return for their labor and investments, which is not the current condition for the majority of dairymen.



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