

Lancaster Farming

New Dairy Legislation Takes Shape In Congress

KARL BERGER

Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON DC—The outlines of a new national dairy policy that would involve a higher support price, assessments and some form of supply control has begun to take shape in Congress, although legislators there are a long way from a final decision.

The legislative process, begun in response to last fall's dramatic price declines, has produced a bill labeled the Milk Industry Management Act of 1991 that was nar-

rowly approved July 16 by members of the House Agriculture Committee. Action by the Senate Agriculture Committee and by the full House of Representatives was expected late last week, according to Lisa Keller, a spokesman for the National Milk Producers Federation.

Nevertheless, a number of major hurdles remain, and new dairy legislation is not expected to be finalized until after Congress returns from a summer recess that begins Aug. 5, Keller said.

If the need for such legislation is all too apparent to dairy farmers trying to cope with the lowest milk prices in a decade, its actual details arouse considerable controversy in Washington. Indeed, the House committee's bill contains a collection of provisions that, depending

on their origin, are opposed by one faction or another in the dairy debate.

The bill's major measures are derived from a proposal put forward by the Washington-based National Milk, which serves as the chief lobbyist for most of the

nation's dairy cooperatives. They include so called two-tier pricing, a board of dairy farmers to oversee exports, a regional exemption from the supply control measures and a mandatory increase in the government support price. Secretary of

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\$1.8 Million Lebanon Fairgrounds Exposition, Convention Center Planned

NORTH CORNWALL (Lebanon Co.) — The Lebanon Area Fairgrounds, owned by the non-profit group, the Lebanon Valley Exposition Corporation, is to be the site of a \$1.8 million exposition center, according to corporation officials.

In a statement made this week by the corporation, "The Lebanon Valley Exposition Corporation — a non-profit corporation formed by a group of Lebanon County farmers and businessmen — has designed a multi-purpose convention center and exposition complex on the site of the current Lebanon Area Fairgrounds."

Construction of the Exposition Center is scheduled to begin this fall.

"The center is intended to function as a civic center which will accommodate a wide range of activities including conventions, livestock shows, trade shows, fairs and all kinds of social events," according to a news release.

The fairgrounds is located on 77-acres at Evergreen/Rocherty (name changes with township border) and Cornwall Roads in North Cornwall township.

According to the statement, "The center is destined to become the only centrally-located complex with all the facilities available on site, to serve community-wide activities.

"The fairgrounds was originally used as a meeting place for the agricultural community. It was the site of the first 4-H Fair in 1970. The FFA and other farm groups used the area for livestock shows and exhibitions.

"Later, non-agricultural groups began to use the facilities and today people from the valley and surrounding areas gather year-round at the fairgrounds for a vari-

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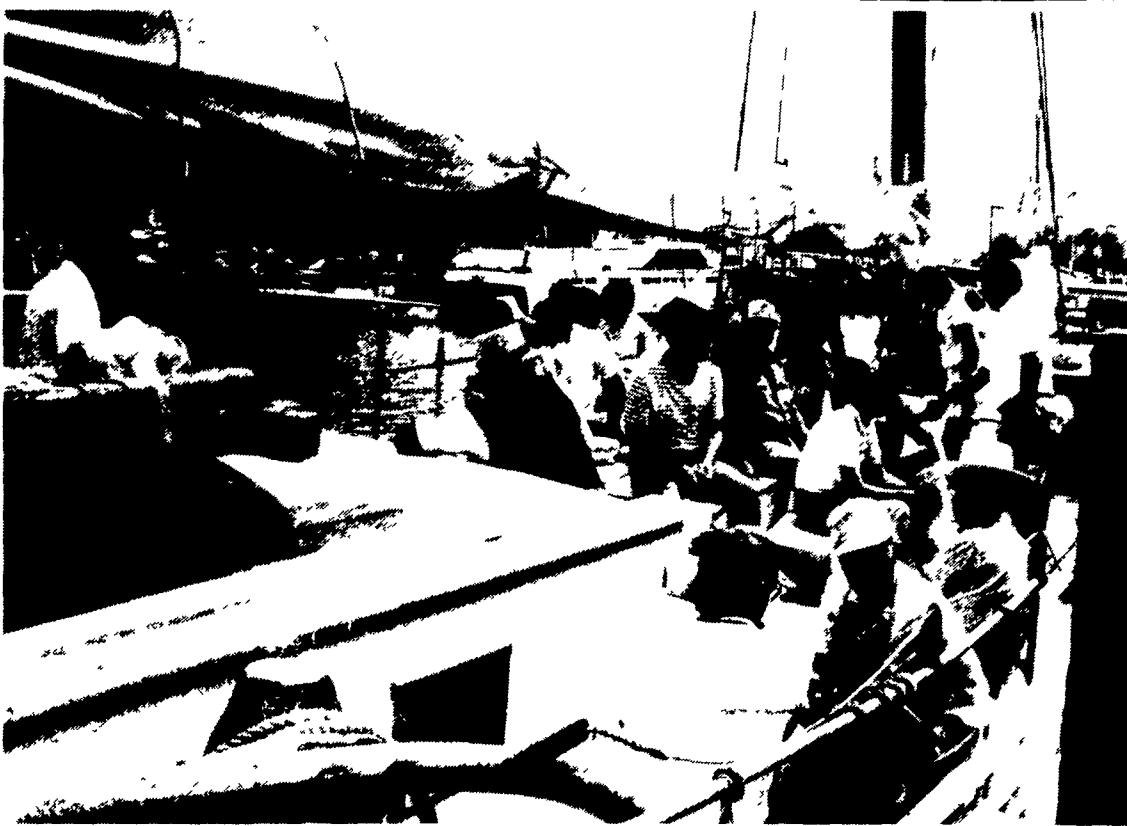
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Lancaster County farmers boarded a skipback for a first-hand look at the deterioration of oyster bars in the Chesapeake Bay.

Farmers Observe Effects Of Bay Contaminants

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

ANNAPOLIS, MD — Ten farm couples from Lancaster County boarded a skipjack, which is an oystering charter boat, for an educational field trip on July 23.

Gentle lapping water, a hot sea breeze, and slapping sails enabled the group to get a taste of what it is like to farm the bay by oystering.

The farmers felt a kinship with those who make a living from the bay when they learned that the top

dollar earned for blue crab is the same as that paid 10 years ago. They empathized with the plight of the fisherman who counts on a plentiful oyster harvest only to find at market time that 90 percent of the oysters are infected with a parasite, which cannot be eradicated.

The origin of the parasite is unknown. And while agricultural runoff and herbicide pollution are not to blame for all the bay's problems, nutrients, sediments, and

pesticides are main agricultural contaminants that cloud the Bay's future.

The group was amazed at the dirtiness of the oyster shells and how much needed to be cleaned off before the shell could be opened.

"It looks like a pile of horse manure," one remarked.

"They didn't used to look like this," a waterman who has been harvesting oysters for 50 years told the farmers. "I remember when

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Wayne County Dairy Farmer Proposes National Milk Withholding

Editor's Note: The following report was received from Roger and Pat Hess who are dairy farmers in Wayne County. They held a meeting at their farm last week, to call for a nation-wide milk withholding to start on Oct. 1, 1991 if no action has been taken to help dairymen by then.

The report of the meeting was written by Margot Spangenberg, who reported for the Hesses and also edits the Pennsylvania Jersey newsletter.

MARGOT SPANGENBERG

STARRUCCA (Wayne Co.) — The frustration that dairy farmers are feeling was evident at a grass roots meeting held last week at the farm of Roger and Pat Hess, Wayne County. The perfect haying weather probably helped to keep the crowd down to about 40 people, both dairy farmers and

representatives of the many ag related businesses that depend on the farmer. The clear blue sky was a reminder of the other problem area farmers are facing, a drought.

Hess himself was so frustrated by what he feels is a lack of real urgent support from farm organizations that he came up with his own idea to let the whole country

know of the dairymen's plight. A grassroots effort to get dairy farmers and the thousands that depend on them to fight together. He feels that only farmers can help themselves and that they should join together in a nationwide effort to get the support price raised to a higher level. One that will pay the bills and provide a reasonable profit.

Every farmer and business should put up signs supporting a nationwide milk withholding starting on Oct. 1, if no action has been taken to help dairymen by then.

Virtually everyone present was in favor of the idea but hoped that it would not be necessary to dump milk. Most were willing to lose some money in the short term if it

would lead to better prices. Some expressed the feeling that they were slowly going broke anyhow so that another loss would not make that much difference. Although the group did not put forth a specific pricing plan most seemed to agree that the prices they were getting last year would

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Drought Brings Out Tobacco Black Shank Disease

BOB ANDERSON

Lancaster Co. Extension

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — As though it isn't enough that the fields are dry and a steep tax on their end product is ominous, but now tobacco growers have yet another concern — Tobacco Black Shank disease.

This week a disease which almost put many tobacco growers out of business in the late 1970s

has show up again on several farms in all parts of Lancaster County. The disease is Black Shank.

Black shank is a serious and destructive disease of tobacco.

In the mid to late 1970s, Black Shank could be found in most tobacco fields in Lancaster County. The disease caused many tobacco growers to switch from growing Pennsylvania Type 41 tobacco to growing Maryland 609.

The Maryland 609 plant has a root system which is resistant to Black Shank.

Black Shank is caused by a soil-borne fungus (Phytophthora parasitica var. nicotianae). The fungus is found in many of the soils where tobacco is grown.

Black Shank attacks the roots and basal parts of the tobacco plant. The roots will be black in color when the outside layer is

removed, they will also have less root hairs than a healthy plant.

During periods of wet weather, when soil is splashed onto leaves and upper parts of the plant, the disease can also attack upper parts of the plant.

The disease can be recognized by a rapid uniform wilting or drooping of all leaves. The roots of the wilted plants are usually

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