

# Farm Forum

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we need more assessments just to get 12.60 milk for 1992?

Now, if this two-tier or HR 2837 passes, the cattlemen will be in our pockets for 31c/cwt for beef price support, (Which would come out to about \$1500.00/year for a farmer shipping 500,000 lbs times 4 years would be about \$6,000 over the life of this bill), 5c assessment for running the program, and the good Lord only knows how much of a deduction to help defray costs of the WIC and child nutrition programs-- if the cost of milk goes up!! All the dairy farmer does is funnel money from his temporary increase to other peoples' pockets.

Add to all those deductions that congress could fit into a bill the probable requirement that farmers will be forced into the government's crop programs: sodbuster, swampbuster, crop reporting, etc., and you have a no win situation for all dairy farmers. The milk market isn't setting prices for reasons I outlined above and every farmer that milks cows will be forced to pay for more non-farm programs. Do corn farmers pay for

higher corn flake prices to WIC recipients? Do wheat farmers pay for higher bread prices to schools and child nutrition programs? Do Peanut farmers and grape growers pay assessments to schools and the USDA because Peanut butter and Jelly prices rose over the last year? No, not on your life. To sell our souls for 12.60 milk and a two tier system now will only drag us down deduction by deduction!

It is quite ironic that with the collapse of the Soviet system, our federal legislators want to export our farm technology to that country. The Soviets should stay away from any of our domestic dairy programs, which are becoming more and more destructive to the very farmers the government is trying to help. Republican Sen. Lugar of Indiana called Thursday for the elimination of the marketing order program, saying IT caused the surplus. Now it really escapes me as how Federal Order 2 or Federal Order 4 creates a milk surplus! USDA Secretary Madigan says he doesn't understand how the Federal Order system works, and maybe its usefulness is past.

Unfortunately, dumping milk is not the answer. Dumped milk becomes "industrial waste" according to PA DER and I would hate to have someone know where MY milkhouse waste goes!! The dairy farmer is misunderstood enough and having the media pick up on tankers dumping milk throws gasoline on the fire and gives our adversaries more ammunition against us.

Diversions could be the solution, but the logistics of setting up a farmer-controlled parallel system of processing and distribution are presently insurmountable.

To succeed you must be able to withdraw milk from the dealer or manufacturer until their pipelines dry up and it must be over a large enough area that milk can't be trucked in. If 95% of the farmers go along, you would have the added advantage of the dealer/handler only processing 5% of normal supplies for about the same costs as processing 100%. The more unreimbursed costs for the processor, the better the farmer's situation. The coops would be hurt by failing to live up to their contracts, but they will be more hurt in the long run if there are no farmer-members left.

You then with good press coverage give your milk to the

consumer at cost: (90c/gallon). When the first hand-written sign appears in the supermarket dairy case that customers are limited to 1 gallon or such, the farmer will have won. Minicams, skycams, satellite cams will quickly spread the word that milk is rationed and consumers will become concerned about something (milk) they have never given much thought. And really, that is all we as farmers are asking for, is give us some consideration to our situation.

Frank Bertrand  
Towanda

Editor:

We as dairy farmers all know something has to be done about the price of milk. There is a lot of talk around, but no real positive action. The government has control and is in no hurry to help. We use the word help loosely. One group wants to dump milk. What good would come of this? Short term, if any and very self destructive. Others are out there making high demands that sound great. Best a farmer with any knowledge of the market knows they are not realistic.

Do we have to wait for the government? No! Do we have to dump milk? No! What do we do to get the price of milk up? It's very simple and best of all the time is

right. With the drought condition and the shortage of forages, let's all just cut back three percent. That is just 30 pounds of every 1000 pounds we ship. Feed less feed, feed more milk for a longer time to calves and cull cows. These actions will save money, make money, and do the industry long-term good. We can put the control in our hands, set back and watch the price of milk go up. We wouldn't have to pay assessments or pay the cattlemen association off to do it either.

We all know the strength we would have if we unite. We can no longer wait for someone else to make the first move. No matter how few or how many cows you have that three percent united would make us financially stronger. If you like putting up signs, put one up that says "We Cut Back" or better yet just do it.

Montrose

Editor:

Thank you for the Dairy of Distinction farm photograph. Dairy farming is difficult this year and a pretty view of our home and business is a pleasure to have.

Olive C. Thomson  
Wyalusing

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