

Eastern National

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production record of 24,670 pounds of milk, 4.6 percent butterfat and 3.8 percent protein.

Silver's lineage is based on Valiant, Elevation and Chief. Her dam, Sweetness has two full sisters which classified Excellent, two maternal sisters classified as Excellent and two classified as Very Good, all with fat records exceeding 1,000 pounds.

The second highest animal sold was the first offered during the sale, consigned by E. James McMath II, of Mt. Union, Pa., went for \$25,000. Born August 1988, Bardale Cleitus Julie-ET recently classified as a Very Good 85. She is the Cleitus daughter of Jim-Slocums Bardale Jody, which classified Excellent 91, 2E and had a 353-day lactation record of 25,683 pounds of milk at 4.3 percent fat. That lactation was started when she was 2-years, 8-months old.

The third highest selling animal was consigned by the Plushanski Farms, of Kutztown, Pa. and brought \$17,500. Plushanski M Fright-ET, born June 1990, is a Michael daughter out of Plushanski Ned Boy Fidelia-ET, classified as Very Good 88 points as a 4-year-old, with a record as a 2-year-old, on a 365-day lactation of 27,802 pounds of milk, 5.0 percent fat and 3.6 percent protein.

The 47 other cattle, presented or promised, sold for \$10,000 or less and averaged \$4,240.43.

According to Nichol, "It was a great sale with a lot of interest from Canada and a number of states. I'm real pleased with everything."

Nichol said he and others began seeking out cattle consignments in May for the sale. He said that despite the low milk prices and the poor economy of the dairy industry, the sale was successful because a lot of buyers are seeking breeding cattle and foundation cattle for marketing.

According to Nichol, when selecting the cattle, he had the international market in mind.

Prior to the sale, Nichol said "In my mind, this is the best group of cattle ever offered at the Eastern National Sale in Pennsylvania."

Dave Rama, out of Delhi, N.Y., said after the show that the sale "Is one of the top sales of the of the year. I was a good sale. A really, really good sale." Rama, who auctioneered for part of the sale, received \$3,100 for his consignment, a heifer born September 1989 and a daughter of Modik Valiant County-ET to a Very Good 85 point 4-year-old.



MILK CHECK

THOMAS JURCHAK

Dairy Specialist
Lackawanna County

Broken Record

SCRANTON (Lackawanna Co.) — I'm not sure any records were broken by cheese prices that increased 26 cents in 26 weeks, pulling up the Minnesota-Wisconsin Price Series for five consecutive spring months, but I may be sounding like a broken record (if you're old enough to remember the phonograph) reporting these increases to you each month.

However, it's the tune that milk producers like to hear and the only criticism I've heard so far is that the rhythm is too slow.

Block cheese prices are now up to \$1.35 a pound, which is 24 cents or 22 percent above the support price, and still there has been no sales from Commodity Credit Corporation stocks.

The flip side of the broken record is another increase in the M-W as a result of the higher cheese prices.

Last month I thought a 41-cent increase would be the biggest jump of the year, but in August it took a leap of 51 cents to \$11.50 for an increase of \$1.48 in five months. That's still \$1.59 less than a year ago; 87 cents less than 1990 and 52 cents better than 1988.

So the gap is closing with more increases expected to push the M-W over \$12 by November. If that happens it will be nearly \$2 higher than last year in November or December.

Farm Price

Translating all that into the minimum price (before premiums) that Order 2 handlers must pay producers at the 201- to 210-mile zone, for milk testing 3.5 percent butterfat, for August is \$12.04 or 45 cents more than last month.

The increase came from a Class I price of \$13 (up 35 cents); Class II at \$11.51 (up 24 cents) and Class III at \$11.60 (up 58 cents).

Class I milk was 40 percent of the pool; Class II, 17 percent and Class III, 42 percent.

Many producers think only in terms of Class I prices and utilization for higher farm prices, but with cheese prices providing most of the increases you should be more aware of Class II and Class III prices, which are influenced more directly by dairy product prices.

For instance, from May to August, when the farm price or blend price increased \$1.20, the Class III price went up \$1.49; Class II \$1.56 and Class I 56 cents. In addition, the Class II price will increase 80 cents in October and Class I will go up 92 cents more. You won't know the Class III price until the M-W is determined for September.

With Class II and Class III prices on 60 percent of the milk in Order 2, these are even more important than Class I prices.

The system was designed so that when there is a demand pull on milk or dairy products anywhere along the marketing chain it would be reflected in the farm price. Recent increases in cheese prices will eventually show up in the Class I price, but we know already that there's enough momentum built up to make farm price increases continue at least to November.

Production Helps

Declines in milk production during the hot summer months have also contributed to higher milk and product prices.

Production dropped all summer and in July went down to 2 percent below last year, but 1990 was the highest of the last three years.

The decrease in production came with falling milk prices as well as the weather. It resulted from less milk per cow as well as fewer cows than we had last year.

The July 1 cattle inventory of USDA shows the number of milk cows down 1 percent from last year and the year before. It also showed that at the same time, while milk replacement heifers were unchanged from last year, their numbers were 7 percent less than 1989. Which means there aren't many reserves to bring into production, and what we have in the milking herd is possibly not being fed for optimum production.

As we learned in 1989, it's important to know where the production cuts are occurring.

That year it was Minnesota and Wisconsin that lost production because of a drought. The direct impact on the M-W was felt all over the country.

Now it appears that production is dropping, or at least not increasing, in nearly all states.

California, with nearly 2 billion pounds of milk a month, is up only 1 percent, but Wisconsin, with slightly higher monthly production, is down 3 percent. Pennsylvania is unchanged but New York and Minnesota are down 2 and 4 percent.

Lower production in Southeastern states has also drawn supplies from the upper Midwest to decrease the supply for the M-W price.

Feed Supplies

Crop growing conditions around the country are about as varied as they are here in Pennsylvania and New York — some areas are good while others are a disaster.

The hot weather has moved up corn maturity and many fields are already in the silo or the grower wishes they were.

Those farmers with only one cutting of hay and a short corn crop will have to buy extra forage — hay or silage — to provide minimums needed for good digestion. Others have hay and silage to sell at a price. Right now grain prices aren't unusually high so farmers should consider the minimum amount of forage needed and make up the difference with grain.

Emergency Livestock Feed

Which brings us up to the Emergency Livestock Feed Program now available through the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in counties designated for disaster assistance or in contiguous counties.

County ASCS offices — at least in Pennsylvania — now have applications available for dairy and livestock farmers who lost over 40 percent of the total of all their grain and forage crops including pasture.

To be eligible, you must receive over 10 percent of your gross income — including off-farm work — from dairy or livestock production. You should pick up an application as soon as possible if you think you qualify.

You can complete it at home, but be prepared to provide documentation of your losses.

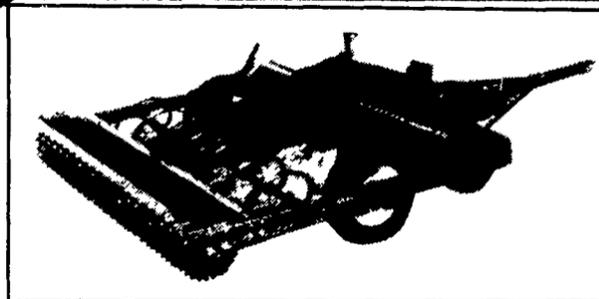
A convenient change this year over the past is that you can get your payment at the ASCS office before you purchase the feed and return a receipt when you buy it. And, as I've mentioned before, you won't be eligible unless you're in compliance with your conservation plan from the Soil Conservation Services.

Rolling on in the '90s



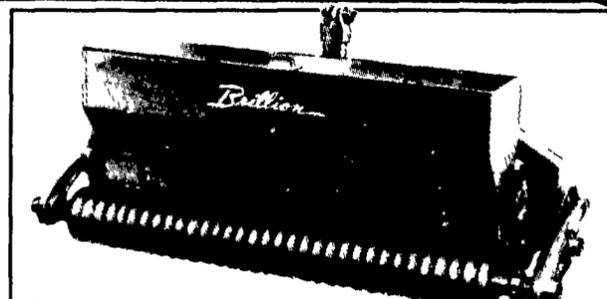
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