

## Ohio Senate Reviews Fair Dairy Pricing

MEDINA, Ohio — On May 14, Ohio House Rep. Sean Logan introduced the Ohio Fair Dairy Pricing Bill to the Senate Ag Committee.

Rep. Logan also provided sponsor testimony by explaining how the bill could help Ohio dairy farmers and why the bill was needed.

Rep. Logan explained that local dairy farmers in his district were concerned that the federal program was not working and last spring experienced a drastic price cut. He said he was urged by his constituents to introduce some type of state legislation similar to what other states have adopted in order to provide a survival price floor for dairy farmers.

The bill allows Ohio dairy farmers to petition the Director of Agriculture and request a hearing.

At the hearing, information would be received regarding the cost of producing milk in Ohio, cost of milk to dealers located in adjoining states and the level of milk prices paid to producers in adjoining states.

Based on this and other testimony given at the hearing, a committee representing dairy farmers, dealers, retailers and consumers can recommend to the Director of Agriculture minimum milk prices.

Once the director, through the panel, decides on minimum milk prices, then Ohio dairy farmers individually must vote approval by a simple majority of those voting in order for these minimum milk prices to take effect, Rep. Logan said.

According to Rep. Logan, one

of the most important criteria for establishing minimum prices was the cost of milk to dealers located in adjoining states. This was put in the bill to keep the Ohio dairy industry competitive and, at the same time, to help dairy farmers get fair prices.

Chuck Ellyson, independent dairy farmer from Columbiana County, said that the state of Minnesota just recently passed a bill which allows a minimum price to be set in their state.

"All we are asking in Ohio is that we have the same ability to establish milk prices. Pennsylvania has had similar type of legislation in effect of since 1930's and we as dairy farmers feel we should be on the same level playing field with

dairy farmers from surrounding states."

Jim Comp, Ashtabula County independent dairy farmer, concurred. "My farm is only seven miles from the Pennsylvania border, but in Pennsylvania dairy farmers are assured of receiving their share of a \$1.45 Class I over-order premium."

(Editor's note. Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board sets over-order premiums. The current premium is \$1.30, but that is with a 25 cent addition made to help compensate for increased production costs due to the 1991 drought.)

"In Ohio we have no assurance that we are going to receive any over-order premium at all. Luckily, in the past couple of years, we have due to a tight milk supply, but

just recently these over-order premiums are starting to decrease."

Wayne Patterson, independent dairy farmer from Tuscarawas County, said, "Many people, after hearing the bill, think that it will automatically increase milk prices, which is not necessarily true. From a survey done by the general accounting office, it showed that the margin for the Cincinnati and Cleveland markets for a gallon of milk, for what farmers received as compared to what consumers paid, increased from 59 cents per gallon in 1985 to \$1.06 per gallon in 1990.

"All dairy farmers want to do is maintain a fair share of the price. Currently, milk prices are gaining strength and will begin to exceed \$13 per hundredweight.

"The Ohio Fair Dairy Pricing Bill will give Ohio dairy farmers the tool needed so that, if these prices come down on a federal level, Ohio dairy farmers can still maintain part of it. That doesn't mean that prices will increase, it only means that we would like to hold onto the price that we already have."

It is expected that testimony for the Senate Ag Committee will begin sometime during the month of June.

The agricultural committee meets every Thursday at 9 a.m. and it was stated at the May 14 committee meeting that ample opportunity would be given for proponents and opponents to testify so that all sides are heard regarding the bill.

## Program To Improve Pennsylvania Beef Herds Under Way

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Pennsylvania beef producers, county extension personnel, and Penn State's Department of Dairy and Animal Science have introduced a program designed to improve the genetic value of Pennsylvania's beef herds.

Two herds were designated as demonstration cooperator herds for the project, one in Washington County and one in Westmoreland. These herds will be used to gather production data related to the use of genetically superior herd sires.

Paul and Bette Slayton from Slayton at Falklands Farm in Bed-

ford have donated the use of a Polled Hereford bull for breeding with cows from one of the project herds, and Penn State has offered an Angus bull for the other. Both bulls have EPDs that rank them well above average for their respective breeds for potential growth of their calves and milk production of their daughters.

The herds will be divided into two equal groups for the 1992 breeding season. One-half of each herd will be bred to a bull of known genetic potential, while the other half will be mated to bulls of unknown genetic value.

Both herds will follow excellent health management and nutritional programs to prevent differences resulting from management deficiencies.

Data on reproductive efficiency, weaning weight, and weaning value will be used to compare the two sires and determine the relative value of each bull to the enterprise.



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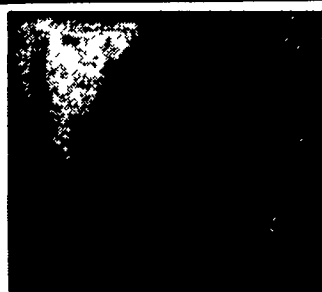
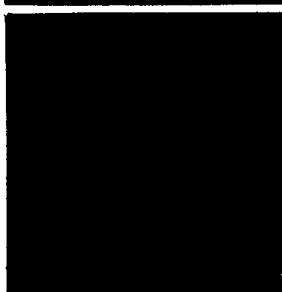
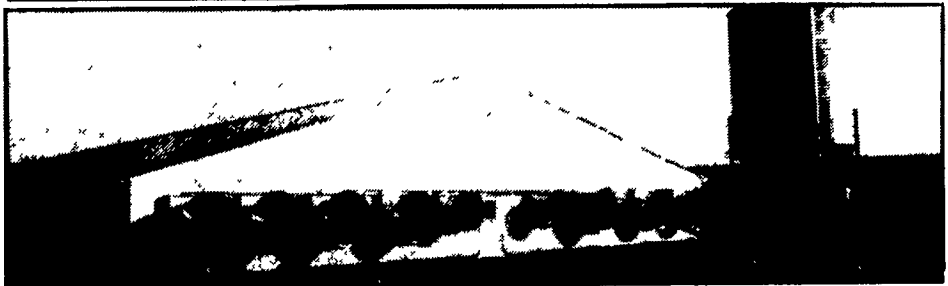
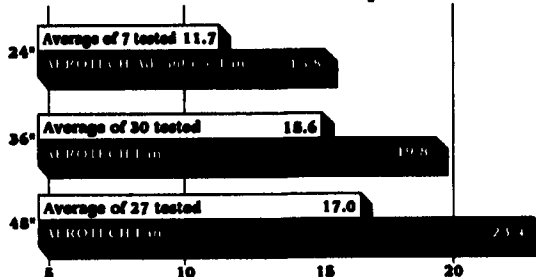
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