

Dairy Farmers Can Help Selves By Exploring Exports

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Dairy farmers can boost milk sales, reduce the government surplus of dairy products, and hold steady the price they get for their raw product by pushing for new exports, dairy officials said at Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative's annual meeting recently.

Eastern President Lewis Gardner, who operates a farm with his wife and sons in Galeton, Pa. said farmers could do more to help themselves by working together to explore export opportunities.

That's why, he said, Eastern and other co-ops are trying to organize another food airlift to Russia this winter.

Unlike last winter, when Northeast farmers donated 10 tons of dairy products to schools and orphanages in Moscow, Gardner said this time the goal is twofold:

- To donate a significantly larger amount of products — 100 to 200 tons of food.

- To send negotiators with the humanitarian aid who would discuss export sales with officials of the former Soviet bloc countries.

A keynote speaker at the annual meeting — Bob Gray, executive director of the Washington-based Council of Northeast Farmer Cooperatives — said the former Soviet Union not only needs to import dairy products with the collapse of its own communist-run farms, but also is able to take advantage of U.S. export credits and loan guarantees to pay for food.

Both Gardner and Gray called on the U.S. government to eliminate bureaucratic hurdles that make it difficult for farmers to participate in a government-assisted export program.

"You can't join the program without export experience," Gardner said, "but you can't get export

experience" without the help of the government program.

Honors Unadilla Farmer
Noel Davis of Unadilla, N.Y. received Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative's Dedicated Service Award at the co-op's annual banquet in Syracuse, N.Y. recently.

Davis, who is retiring after serving nine years on Eastern's board of directors, was cited for "years of hard, dependable work on behalf of Eastern farmers and the co-op." Eastern President Lewis Gardner presented the award.

During his tenure on the board, Davis has served in various positions, including secretary and assistant secretary-treasurer, and as chairman of several committees.

Profits For Cash Bonuses
Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative paid out \$868,524 in profits to dairy farmers in the form of cash bonuses before ending the fiscal year with net proceeds of \$128,524, co-op officials announced at Eastern's annual meeting.

That payout, while not the largest, continues a practice started by the board of directors in 1987 to return profits monthly to member farmers in the form of extra cash premiums, rather than retaining profits in the co-op.

As a result, President Lewis Gardner noted, Eastern returned more than \$4.7 million in profits to farmers. That included \$300,000 in fiscal 1988, \$600,000 in fiscal 1989, \$1.2 million in fiscal 1990, \$1.8 million in fiscal 1991, and nearly \$869,000 in fiscal 1992.

Net proceeds of \$128,524 were up from last year's \$10,275. General Manager Michael Donovan said the co-op had sales of \$212,468,314 on 1.6 billion

pounds of milk, compared to \$216,705,978 the previous year on the same volume of milk. Eastern, as the marketing arm for members, passed the majority of those sales dollars to farmers through twice-a-month milk checks.

Honors Top Farmers, Field Rep, Journalist

A Pennsylvania dairy farmer who made Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative's top 10 list for the past four years is Eastern's 1992 Quality Farmer of the Year.

That means Bruce Bartley Jr. of Cogan Station, Pa. produces "the best quality milk" in the entire co-op, which includes more than 3,000 farms in a nine-state area, Eastern Membership Manager Tony Schlesier said.

The top quality farmer says that he doesn't develop work habits with the idea of winning awards, but that worrying about cleanliness every day apparently makes a difference.

The Bartleys raise corn and alfalfa on 100 acres to feed their 40 milking cows and 20 heifers.

Top 10 Farmers
Nine other farms from New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont join the Bartley dairy on this year's list of top 10 quality producers. In alphabetical order, those top quality farmers are John and Gail Bunting, Treadwell, N.Y.; Mrs. Ruth Chesney, Martinsburg, Pa.; Francis Dynda Jr., Port Allegany, Pa.; Harvey and Faith English, Shortsville, N.Y.; Alfred and Susan Gibbs, Slate Hill, N.Y.; Pricilla Kintner, Corbettsville, N.Y.; Ronald and Virginia Lindgren, Granville, N.Y.; Daniel Peet, Richmond, Vt.; and Charles Walker, Geneva, N.Y.

"These top ten farmers are among a total of 113 who will receive gold seal certificates for producing outstanding quality milk," said Schlesier, Eastern's

membership manager. "Another 600 farmers will be receiving quality awards for producing milk that exceed our quality standards."

The awards were presented at Eastern's annual banquet. Other honors were announced at the banquet.

Robin Breeding of Greenwood, Del., was named Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative's Field Representative of the Year for "outstanding service to members" and for "superior management" of his assigned territory.

With Eastern since 1976, Breeding works as a quality control inspector and member recruiter in Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey.

Before joining Eastern, he attended Shepherds College in Shepherdstown, W.Va., where he was graduated with a degree in biology.

Rod Fry, owner/operator of Rod Fry Trucking of Muncy, Pa., received Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative's 1992 Driver Recognition Award.

Fry, who has hauled milk for Eastern for 15 years, was cited for "outstanding service to Eastern farmers" and for "following precise sampling techniques to ensure product quality."

His five-truck operation picks up 165,000 pounds of milk daily

from Eastern members, including the co-op's 1992 Farmer of the Year, Bruce Bartley Jr. of Cogan Station, Pa.

Gordin Conklin, editor of American Agriculturalist magazine for more than two and a half decades, was honored by Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative with its 1992 Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award.

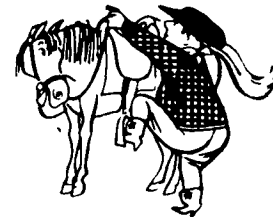
Conklin, who is now editor emeritus of the magazine, was cited for "a distinguished lifetime of service to agriculture in the Northeast as a teacher, communicator, and promoter of farmers and their way of life."

Ralph Denslow of Boonville, N.Y. received Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative's Dedicated Service Award during the co-op's annual banquet.

Denslow, who is retiring after serving nine years on Eastern's board of directors, was cited for "years of hard, dependable work" on behalf of farmers and the co-op. President Lewis Gardner presented the award.

An active member of the cooperative since 1950, Denslow was president of Eastern's Boonville Local for three years and was a delegate for 18 years before being elected to his first term on the board in 1983.

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