

## Independent Farmers Need To Exploit Act

AMES, Iowa — In an era of accelerating agricultural change and educational needs, a University of Wisconsin agricultural economist says independent farmers need to learn to fully exploit, in a modern context, the collective bargaining and group marketing benefits available to them through an old U.S. law — the Capper-Volstead Act.

In an address to nearly 50 Wisconsin National Farmers Organization (NFO) dairy staff members meeting in Eau Claire, Wis., Dr. Bob Cropp said that the NFO is uniquely positioned to lead, and implement, a broad-based educational program about the marketing and commodity pricing opportunities offered by the Capper-Volstead Act.

Cropp, a nationally recognized authority on cooperatives, is director of the Center for Cooperatives at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and an extension milk marketing specialist.

"Capper-Volstead was passed in 1922 to give farmers protection from the antitrust provisions of the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1899," Cropp said. "Capper-Volstead gives producers of agricultural and horticultural products the right to organize for purposes of marketing as long as those producers don't unduly enhance price."

"Three main provisions of the act lay out the ground rules," he said. "The group must mutually benefit all members. It must have one-member one-vote representation. And it must not do more business with non-members than with members."

Cropp emphasized that "today, farmers look at the concentration happening in agricultural production, processing and marketing and they think they're helpless. Nothing could be further from the

truth. No court case since Capper-Volstead was passed has ever set a limit to farmers' control of their markets through such organized groups. And no co-op ever has been found guilty of unduly enhancing prices."

The economist reminded the NFO staff members that a few years ago the Government Accounting Office thought some ag cooperatives were getting too large. The ensuing study found no evidence of undue price enhancement.

"What that means is that farmers have a lot more opportunity to price their production than they think. The sky's the limit. Under the Marketing Agency In Common (MAIC) provisions of the Act, multiple cooperatives can work together to enhance commodity prices," he said. "Farmers don't realize what they can do together. They need to keep the heat on their cooperative leaders to work together."

He cited several instances where dairy cooperatives are beginning to work together to share production, inventory, and sales information. "Hopefully, this modest beginning will escalate into a full-fledged MAIC," he said.

Cropp pointed out that part of the problem is that "the school systems don't teach a lot about Capper-Volstead and cooperative marketing. That's an educational need that I see as a great opportunity for the National Farmers Organization to satisfy."

He said that growing numbers of farmers feel poorly represented by their agricultural organizations. "The social climate is right for a group marketing message like the NFO has to tell to take hold and grow," he said.

Cropp stressed the importance of national or very large regional

group marketing efforts, if those efforts are to be successful.

"We're very quickly getting into situations where there are only two or three large buyers operating nationwide," he said. "The only way for farmer group marketing programs to deal with such large buying entities is for the farmers to have equally national or regional capabilities. The days are gone when a group marketing program in a single county or even a state will work for long."

As an example of why regional programs aren't as effective as national programs, Cropp cited

the dairy situation between the upper Midwest states and California. "It's hard to bargain for higher M&W milk prices when California has a state milk marketing order that allows cheaper milk to go into cheese. That's why national bargaining programs offer the most opportunity to influence prices," he said.

Departing from his discussion of the dairy industry, Cropp observed that the NFO has a "wide open marketing opportunity in dairy cull cows. It provides a service, adds value, and benefits farmers."

Another area of NFO opportu-

ity, according to Cropp, is in hog marketing. "The structure of the hog business is changing so fast that group marketing programs like the NFO offers is one way family farmers can compete with the big corporate hog farms," he said. "Another NFO opportunity is with beef producers in forage-heavy areas where beef expansion should occur."

"I'd like to see NFO and the various co-ops begin discussions on joint marketing programs."

In closing, Cropp said, "I hope farmers close ranks and make group marketing programs work. It's the best kind of rural economic development."

## Dairy Extension Gears Up For Manure Management

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — "Get involved now with your Coastal Zone Management people," said Lynn Shuyler, nonpoint source coordinator for the Chesapeake Bay program office (Region III) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Shuyler spoke Tuesday, June 15, at a Dairy Manure Management symposium during the 88th annual meeting of the American Dairy Science Association, hosted June 13-16 by the University of Maryland.

Addressing his challenge to dairy extension professional workers in the 29 states or territories affected by the federal Coastal Zone Management program, Shuyler said that failure to get involved can mean loss of potential funding for state programs.

He noted that now is an opportune time to get involved because the Coastal Zone Management program is scheduled for reauthorization in 1995. Thus,

changes can be suggested. Reauthorization of the federal Clean Water Act also is under way.

Most of the 29 affected states have Coastal Zone Management offices operated by two separate federal agencies — the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

It is important to make contacts with both offices, Shuyler said, and to be prepared for the fact that there is little coordination between the two.

He noted that "Coastal Zone Management is significant because 75 percent of the U.S. population lives within 50 miles of the Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes, or an ocean."

Delaware, Florida and Guam are the only states or territories located entirely within the Coastal Management Zone. But major portions of Maryland and most of the Atlantic and Pacific seaboard states also are involved, along with the Great Lakes and Gulf Coast areas.

Deanne D. Morse, extension dairy specialist from the University of California at Davis, followed up Shuyler's talk with a presentation on the National Model for Dairy Manure Management, developed by the national extension dairy manure management committee. Lester E. Lanyon, a research agronomist at Penn State, is a member of that committee. Lanyon also spoke at the ADSA meeting.

Morse noted that the manure management model is an outgrowth of the National Livestock, Poultry and Aquaculture Waste Management Workshop, held in 1991 in Kansas City, Mo.

One part of the model involves a nationwide computer base of information relating to dairy manure management. A Purdue Water Quality data base also is available through electronic mail.

And extension dairy specialists in three states — Wisconsin, Oregon, and Florida — are gearing up for pilot projects that may help establish manure management guidelines for the rest of the nation.

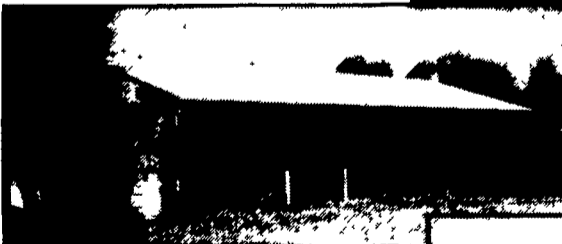
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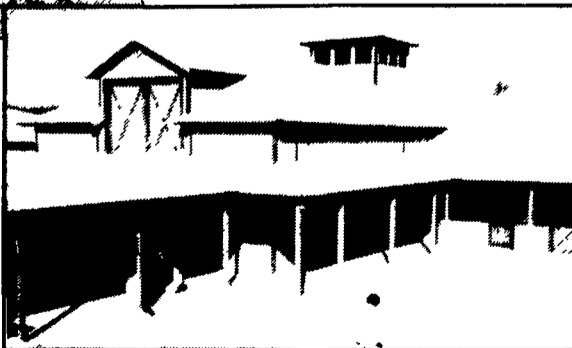
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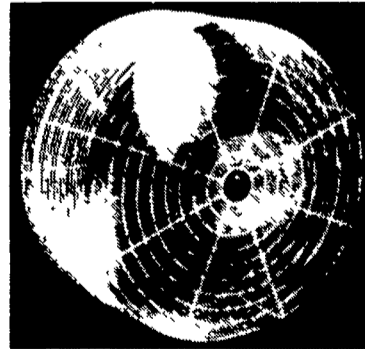
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