

MILK CHECK

THOMAS JURCHAK

Dairy Specialist
Lackawanna County

SCRANTON (Lackawanna Co.) — Just like the cold winter weather that's been with us the last five weeks, as of Feb. 14, nothing has changed in dairy product prices since last month.

Block cheese prices gained a half cent last Friday and barrels a quarter cent two weeks before, but that's it since Christmas.

Fortunately, cheese prices now are holding at levels that are over 14 cents higher than last February.

Last year that \$1.16 in February was the low point of the year and they started up in March. Right now, starting up is just wishful thinking, but then nobody expected prices to hold this long into the new year.

Reasons for the continuing higher prices are not all weather related, but that's a good place to start.

Milk production nationally was down again 2 percent in January, for the sixth consecutive month.

Again the big cuts were in the upper Midwest and Northeast where weather was a problem for maintaining production and getting the milk off the farm. This affected the supply coming to processing plants at a time when demand was rising.

I believe handlers were stocking up to make sure they had enough for any panic buying by snowbound consumers. Or, maybe, kids drink more milk when they stay home from school.

Butter vs. Cheese

In any case, the weather was a factor along with the new Class IIIa started in all federal orders in December. That made butter-powder manufacturers competitive with the cheese makers.

Class IIIa milk in January was priced more than \$2 less for butter and powder than the Class III milk for cheese.

So, even with 65-cent butter and \$1.10 powder, at prices that haven't changed in five weeks, cheese makers had to scramble for their share of the shrinking manufacturing milk supply.

How long these prices last may very well depend on the weather or handlers' perception of when milk production will start increasing this spring.

It's already on the rise in the south and west and if the Midwest and Northeast even come up to normal levels we may still have a spring flush. However, as long as product prices stay up estimates of how low the Minnesota-Wisconsin Price Series will go keep looking better and better.

Lower But Better

Speaking of the M-W, you even came close to holding the price here but it did drop only 10 cents to \$12.41 — the highest in January in four years and \$1.52 better than last year.

In December, the price was \$1.17 higher than last year and in February the difference will be even greater. A year ago the M-W fell 95 cents from November to January but it was only 34 cents less this year.

However, lower but better is not true of the farm price. That's higher and better in all Federal Orders in this area. You'll see increases of 10 to 15 cents for your January milk over December's price, and \$1.15 to \$1.40 over last January.

That doesn't include any over-orders premiums you may be getting from your handler, but these are becoming fewer and smaller, so check your milk check.

Pricewise, you're off to a good start for the new year, but keep your pencil sharp on feed costs and shop around for the best buys or you may just pass all the milk price increases on to your creditors.

Sheep Club Members Welcome

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Youth who are interested in feeding market lambs or raising breeding sheep are invited to attend the reorganizational meeting of the Lancaster County 4-H Woolies Club at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 14, at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

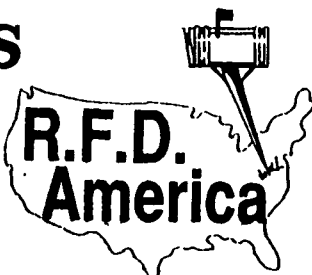
Election of officers will highlight the meeting activities.

To be eligible for membership in the club, members must be between the ages of 8 and 19, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap. They have the responsibility of caring for and feeding their own sheep and keeping records on their lambs. They also have the opportunity of showing their lambs at the 4-H Roundup or at a community fair.

For more information about the 4-H club prog-

ram, contact the Penn State Cooperative Extension (717) 394-6851.

**You're Invited to
RFD AMERICA'S
CUSTOMER
APPRECIATION
DAY**



**Wednesday, March 2, 1994
10 am - 2 pm**

To Be Held In The Hoffman Building - Quarryville

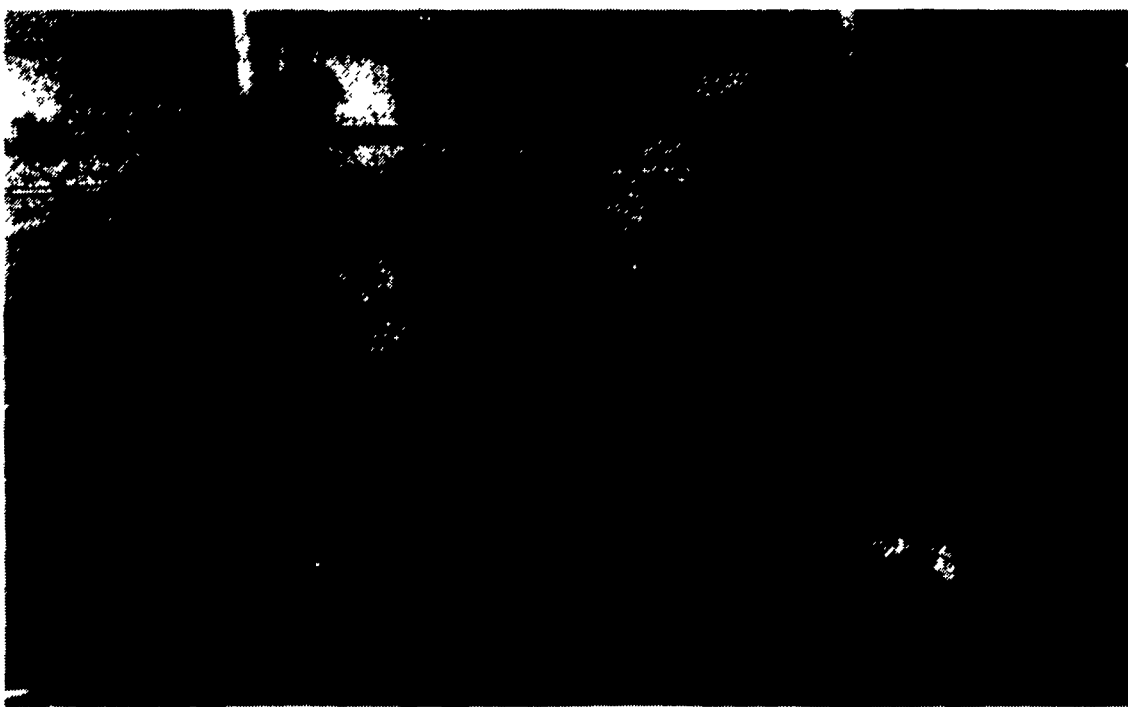
**FEATURED TOPICS: Mastitis
BST**

**Representatives from West Agro,
Agri-Dynamics & Monsanto Will Be
Making Presentations**

Lunch Will Be Provided

**FOR RESERVATIONS OR MORE INFORMATION
CALL (717) 786-1303 from 9-5. RESERVE BY 2/24**

Cedar Crest Equipment Holds Open House



A representative of Cedar Crest Equipment talks to a group of men who are part of a crowd of several hundred who attended the farm equipment dealer's open house at the Lebanon Area Fair Grounds. Some of the latest equipment in feed handling, and also in manure storage and handling was on display inside the large show barn at Lebanon.

Woodward Joins Dairylea

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Thad E. Woodward, of Canton, has been named general manager of the newly created Southern Division of Dairylea Cooperative Inc., announced Rick Smith, chief executive officer of Dairylea.

Woodward will be primarily responsible for membership activities and recruitment in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and several Southern Tier counties of New York.

"We are extremely pleased to have Thad Woodward join the Dairylea team," said Smith. "Thad brings an enormous amount of experience in working with the agricultural community, as well as the strong management skills needed for a growing agribusiness."

Prior to joining Dairylea, Woodward was employed with Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative Association Inc., for 23 years. Since 1979, Woodward served as vice president and general manager of Eastern Best Products, creating and establishing a profitable agri-products supply business through six regional stores and a rural delivery system.

"In the past year, Dairylea has strengthened its position in Pennsylvania with two new major milk sales," said Smith. "Our intent, with the addition of Thad, is to



Thad Woodward

place a renewed emphasis on Dairylea's operations in Pennsylvania and serving our customers' and members' needs. Thad also will be representing Dairylea at appropriate industry matters and providing support in related areas such as milk marketing, hauling, laboratory services, insurance and livestock marketing."

Earlier in his career with East-

ern, Woodward served as a quality control and field representative, inspecting dairy farms for regulatory compliance, while engaging in member recruitment.

In addition, Woodward owned and operated his own dairy, Hermit Hill Farm, from 1975 to 1992. The farm received the Dairy of Distinction Award in 1988 and was honored with production and quality awards from the Bradford County Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

Woodward is a charter member and past vice president of the Pennsylvania Milk Promotion Board and serves on the Guthrie Health-Care System Board of Directors. He is a past president of Troy Community Hospital and a past master of the Canton Masonic Lodge.

Woodward and his wife, Sheila, have three children, Tami, Tracy and Bob, and three grandchildren.

Dairylea, a Syracuse-based dairy cooperative with more than 2,200 farmer members throughout the Northeast, markets approximately 3.1 billion pounds of milk annually. Dairylea participates and is invested in a milk marketing network stretching from Maine to Maryland to Ohio.



MILK. IT DOES A BODY GOOD.
MIDDLE ATLANTIC MILK MARKETING ASSOCIATION, INC

ATTENTION FARMERS - LANCASTER AREA (Own Dairy Cows, Calves and Horses?)

Attend a **Local Meeting** and learn how to treat and prevent herd health problems with an **all-natural product**. **MEETING TO BE CO-HOSTED BY JOHN H. BEILER, 12 A S. Ronks Rd., Ronks, Pa.**

John has used our **VITA-MIN-LAC** products consistently since 1990 and has received excellent results. After over three years of use, nobody understands the results that our products **Vita-Min-Lac** and **Cow Care** can give you any better than John. Please consider what John has to say and plan to attend the March 16th meeting.

I used **Vita-Min-Lac** on a horse that had eaten rumensin. I am convinced **Vita-Min-Lac** took the poison out of her system! That horse went through a real sweat, layed down for awhile but is now back in full health again. I used to use penicillin when my cows went off feed, but that contaminated the milk and meat. I now use **Vita-Min-Lac** because it knocks down a fever and fights infection just as good, plus it also stimulates my cows appetite and immune system.

For a serious illness, a strong anti-biotic may be needed but they work better with **Vita-Min-Lac** than penicillin because my cows show much better heat and conception. I have also had good luck with **Vita-Min-Lac** for dysentary and dehydration caused by weather changes, frozen silage and other factors.

Vita-Min-Lac has also reduced a high cell count problem that I used to have before using **Vita-Min-Lac** and I always use it for my freshening cows to stop udder edema and cleaning problems. Call the folks of **Vita-Min-Lac** at 1-800-848-8969 (Toll Free) or contact me personally anytime before March 12th if you plan on attending. See you there!

John H. Beller
★ Door Prizes to farmers herd with highest cell count or twisted stomach! (Refreshments served)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16th AT THE RONKS FIRE CO.
(Located beside R.R. underpass along N. Ronks Rd. between Rt. 30 and Rt. 340)