

**MILK  
CHECK**  
THOMAS JURCHAK  
Dairy Specialist  
Lackawanna County

SCRANTON (Lackawanna Co.) — The Minnesota-Wisconsin Price Series set a record high of \$12.77 for March.

The old record of \$12.67 for March was made in 1981, following an increase of 74 cents in the support price to \$13.10 in October 1980.

That \$13.10 was the highest dairy support price on record, but that \$12.67 M-W price was as close as it ever came to the \$13.10 support. Which has something to say about how high you can try to push prices either through support prices, or other methods, if the market doesn't exist to warrant the higher prices — even if the Commodity Credit Corporation is one of the buyers in the market.

For more recent comparisons, that \$12.77 M-W price for March was 36 cents more than last month, and \$1.75 better than last year.

From a low of \$11.17 last August, it has made steady advances for the last seven months that total \$1.60 and average nearly 23 cents a month, with more to come even as we start the spring season.

Reasons to this counter-seasonal good news, for producers with good feed supplies or sources, are the same as they have been all winter — milk production that has been slow to increase for a variety of reasons, and continuing good demand from handlers who don't want to risk the

prospect of even lower production in the future.

In addition, the Dairy Export Incentive Program is finally revived and adding to the demand side particularly for milk powder.

**Another Record**

The reason for the record high M-W price centered largely on a record high cheese price.

On Friday (April 1), the National Cheese Exchange reported prices of nearly \$1.40 a pound for blocks and over \$1.37 for barrels. This was the result of nine weeks of price increases that totaled over 9 cents on blocks and nearly 12 cents on barrels.

The previous highs of \$1.39 and \$1.36 were also set in April last year. The high continued through May when they started a steady decline of 18 cents in 10 weeks before starting up again in August.

Perhaps there is something in this pattern of a year ago that may give some clues to the future.

No one believes cheese prices can continue their present course much longer. Some forecasters have already predicted an imminent crash. They just don't agree on when it will come.

Of course, the cheese prices haven't been all that have contributed to the higher M-W. Powder prices have gone as high as \$1.16 with the help of subsidized exports under DEIP, and butter prices have almost put CCC out of business as a price supporter.

Lower production that hangs on in the upper Midwest has milk moving from Florida to Wisconsin as production increases in the warmer climate.

**Market Adjustment**

As in the past, all of these trends can change in the future. Just as the stock market needed adjustment and recovered, watch for a similar adjustment in milk prices as the factors that produced these record high prices shift in response to changing conditions and certainly to the higher prices that they produced.

What goes up can come down, and certainly we should learn from the past.

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**Lebanon Establishes  
Awards To Honor  
Conservationists**

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff

NORTH CORNWALL (Lebanon Co.) —

A proposal to establish three separate conservation awards was approved at a committee meeting of conservation groups Monday night.

According to Chuck Wertz, Lebanon County Conservation District manager, the awards will honor the conservation landowner of the year, conservationist of the year, and conservation educator.

The awards were patterned after guidelines established by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD), according to Wertz. A committee established by several county conservation groups used some of the guidelines of the PACD and combined several categories to come up with three basic awards, said Wertz.

According to the district manager, the Conservation Landowner Award is patterned after PACD's Conservation Farmer of the Year Award category but is open to any farmer, landowner, civic organization, government agency, business, or industry. The Conservation Landowner Award will examine how conservation has been applied to varying land uses, including but not limited to farming, woodlot management/forestry, watersheds, wildlife/recreation, urban conservation, and resource recovery/recycling programs.

For some time, the conservation district has only sporadically honored a conservation educator, according to Wertz. The Conservation Education Award would honor either a paid professional or volunteer educator who has contributed time and expertise to the promotion of conservation through education.

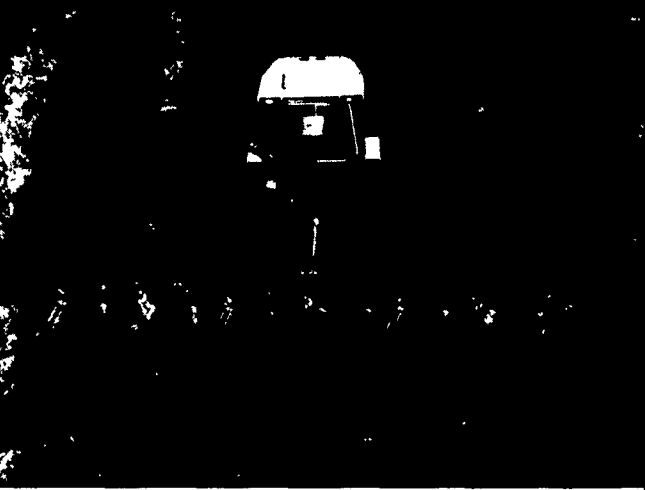
"We're not going to exclude people who are not paid as educators," said Wertz.

The Conservationist of the Year Award will stress voluntary conservation efforts of an individual or group entity that is not necessarily a landowner practicing conservation, according to Wertz.

"We never really had a good, comprehensive awards program due to lack of public support," said Wertz. He indicated that local representatives of the Lebanon County Federation of Sportsman's Clubs, state fish and boat commission, game commission, state bureau of forestry, and other groups serve on the committee.

The awards will be presented at the annual county conservation meeting on November 3 at noon at the Lebanon Valley Agricultural Center.

For more information about the awards, contact Wertz at the district, (717) 272-3377.



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