

**DAIRY ISSUE
SPECIAL
REPORT**

**DAIRY SITUATION
AND OUTLOOK**

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Milk production continues to increase over year ago levels. Milk production across the country ranges from near-peak levels in the South to seasonally increasing in

most other regions.

However, April milk production numbers for 22 reporting states clearly show that the increase in milk production has slowed. April milk production was only 2.2 percent more than a year ago. This compares to increases for the previous three months (January, February, and March) of 3 to 5 percent.

The difference is explained by increases in milk per cow. Compared to year ago levels, milk per cow has been up 3.1 to 4.4 percent

compared to an increase for April of only 1.9 percent. April milk cow numbers were .2 percent higher than a year ago.

What has brought down the relative increase in milk production per cow? The answer lies in the West and Southwest. It is quite evident that California floods have impacted on herd health. Compared to a year ago, California's milk per cow for April was down 1.2 percent. With 2.1 percent more milk cows, California still produced .9 percent more milk, but a far cry from earlier increases of 5 to 8 percent.

Milk per cow was even for Washington and down .7 percent for Idaho. Texas and New Mexico also experienced lower milk per cow — 4.8 percent and 4.9 percent, respectively. Since each of these states, except Texas, had more milk cows than a year ago (Washington 1.9 percent, Idaho 11.9 percent, and New Mexico 17.1 percent), each still had more total milk production (Washington 1.8 percent, Idaho 11.4 percent, and New Mexico 11.4 percent). The exception was Texas with .5

percent fewer milk cows and 5.2 percent less total milk.

Cows continue to milk much better than a year ago in the Midwest. April milk per cow was up 4.4 percent for Wisconsin and 2.6 percent for Minnesota. Wisconsin had .7 percent more milk cows while cow numbers were down 2.5 percent for Minnesota. Total milk production was up 5.1 percent for Wisconsin.

Milk production per cow has also improved in the Northeast. Compared to a year ago, milk per cow as up 3.7 percent for New York and 4.4 percent for Pennsylvania. While New York had 2.6 percent fewer milk cows, Pennsylvania had .6 percent more milk cows. Total milk production was up .9 percent for New York and 5 percent for Pennsylvania.

This increase in milk production, although at lower levels than previous months, has put downward pressure on farm level prices.

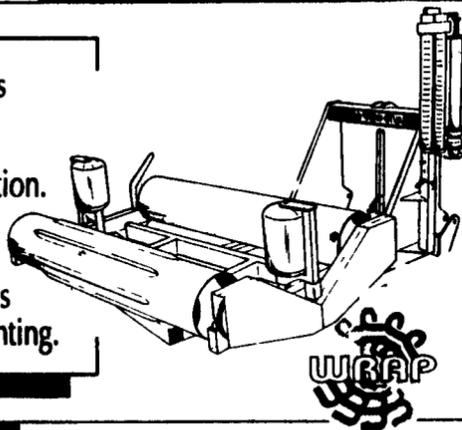
But farm level prices could be approaching their low point this spring, especially if the West and Southwest continue to experience a slowdown in milk expansion.

The Minnesota-Wisconsin price (M-W) declined \$.73 in April to \$11.16 per hundredweight. This was \$1.83 per hundredweight lower than a year ago. The decline reflects weakening cheese prices since mid-March. As of May 12, on the National Cheese Exchange, cheddar barrels had declined 9.75 cents per pound and cheddar 40 pound blocks 12 cents per pound. Cheese prices could decline further, but many are of the opinion that prices are near the low.

Buyers will once again feel more comfortable in building or maintaining inventories. Although nonfat dry milk prices are steady, there is some concern over increasing inventories. Butter supplies remain close in balance and prices have been firm.

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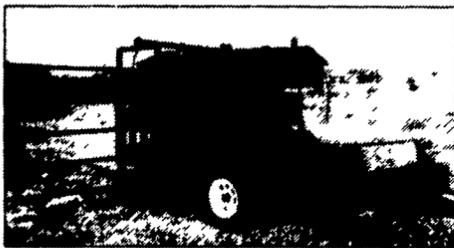
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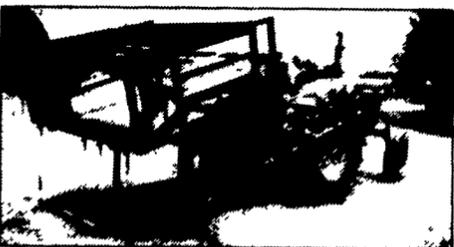
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