

Experts Brief Ag Educators On Markets, Developing Public Policy

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relations for Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, served as moderator of the program.

The first morning speakers formed a panel. They included Jim Sumner, president of the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council, a nonprofit promotion organization that works as a cooperator with the Foreign Agricultural Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); Peter Witmer, chief of the Domestic and International Trade division of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Market Development; and Michael Moran, executive director of the New Independent States (NIS) Programs of the Former Soviet Union for Agricultural Cooperative Development International (ACDI), a private nonprofit organization that provides international development expertise and technical assistance in areas such as agribusiness and trade development, banking and credit systems.

Louis Moore, well-known Penn State University professor and extension coordinator of agricultural economics and rural sociology, served as moderator for the panel.

The three outlined a characterization of the current export market within the United States.

According to the panel, for the most part, the dairy industry in the United States has developed many of its own export markets, limited as they are. All three cited attitude problems within the industry that treat exports as only a way to get rid of unwanted surplus.

The speakers said that in order to be successful in developing an export market, research and development of possibly new lines and forms of product have to be undertaken.

The bottom line according to the speakers is that the world export market must be viewed as a market that requires a committed effort for production, not a dump for surplus.

They cited the success of New Zealand in exporting a large amount of its production. However, it was noted that while New Zealand (because of its low input dairying) enjoys the lowest production costs, the country produces about the same amount as California, and it treats exports as a steady, full-time market.

Export infrastructure was also discussed, and the lack of it. In Pennsylvania, there are two deep water ports within easy access to major dairy production centers and

highways providing access to other export ports.

There are some facilities producing some traditional milk-derived products, such as milk powder and butter, that can be exported, if markets exist.

However, the infrastructure for meeting buyers or potential buyers in other parts of the world is not strong and far from complete.

The industry needs to devote more attention and energy to creating and filling foreign markets for dairy products, and it shouldn't wait for the U.S. government to do it.

Advice was given that cultural differences in expressing respect and in conducting business must be learned and respected in order to develop long-standing relationships.

Developing and maintaining relationships is key to opening many direct export markets, they said.

From the perspective of providing a foreign market with a raw or finished product, educating the intended consumer about how the product is consumed and what are its uses and benefits is key to developing markets.

At the same time, some well-established branded products don't need much explanation, though developing those markets may require much more commitment to developing personal business relationships.

Other considerations are the ability of the intended consumer to pay for the products and transportation costs, which were reported to be comparatively relatively high in the U.S.

Following the panel discussion, Frederick Bowman, Latin American general manager for Sire Power Inc., Bob Dever, secretary and CEO of Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, and Brenda Briggs, director the Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program, each gave short presentations about their respective work and approach to exporting.

Bowman prefaced his remarks saying that he was more comfortable speaking in Spanish than in English, though he was born a Pa. Dutchman in Berks County. He said he moved to Venezuela when he was 3 years old, implying that he learned Spanish as a first language. He has a doctorate in veterinary medicine earned in 1978 from the Universidad Central Del Ecuador-Quito, in Ecuador. He currently lives in Long Branch, N.J., but frequently works in the field in Latin America.

He said that when he started

with Sire Power Inc., he had never sold anything, and he wasn't comfortable with being a salesman.

In effect, he said he has never become one, though he has helped establish growing sales in a region where basic dairying methods don't necessarily support the use of artificial insemination, or the use of improved genetics for high production.

He said that in many places people are milking by hand and if they breed using high production genetics and go from milking by hand a cow that produces 15 pounds of milk per day to one producing 60 pounds per day, it becomes too much work. He said some people have had to use two people to hand milk each cow.

He said what he has done is to concentrate on teaching people how to use artificial insemination.

He said he has a number of distributors for semen located throughout the region and that each one serves as a liaison with the local potential consumers.

Through the distributors, he said he will go into the field on the farm and provide instruction to the farmer on how and what to do with artificial insemination.

Dever presented an outline of the cooperative and its mission, and said that exporting is an important, but small portion of the

cooperative's business. The federal Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP) has made all the cooperative's exporting possible.

Briggs talked about exporting apples to Central and South America and how it has been all possible through export programs and the formation of an export council by all apple-producing states, except Washington, which conducts its own exporting program.

The afternoon program was dedicated to public policy, where the educator fits in, and what role that public figure should take in helping to form public policy.

Speaking first was Philip Favero, an associate professor and extension specialist with the University of Maryland, with interests in state and local government policy analysis.

Favero described three different philosophical approaches to dealing with public policy.

Basically he said there are three different outlooks to developing public policy which goes back to the 1930s, when Americans began getting better and more science-based educations. He said that people began adopting science more widely and approached public policy as following facts and ignore values.

Later on, people began disput-

ing the facts-only approach and have been approaching policy from the basis of considering facts and values.

And after listening to the debate, a third group's approach has arisen and its approach to policy is to question the validity of science, and render its own opinion.

Favero advised that public educators have no business be policy advocates and should not support one side over another in public debate, but should serve as moderator, facilitator and information provider, but not as crusader.

In his presentation, Herbert Cole, professor of agricultural sciences in the Penn State Department of Plant Pathology, argued that public educators can and should be advocates for certain policies, such as preserving agriculture.

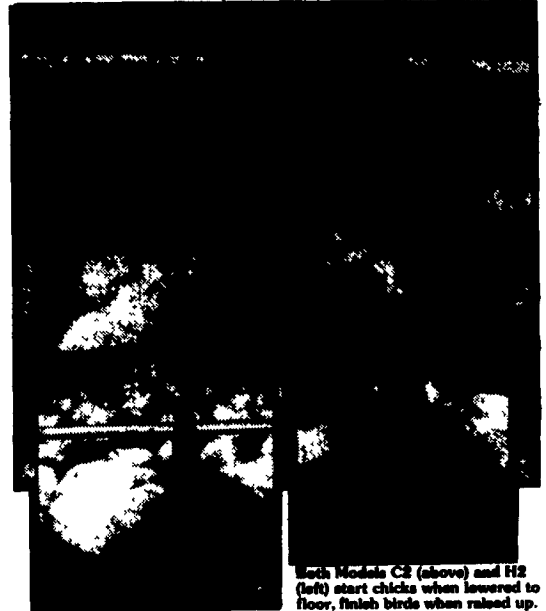
His argument is that agriculture is the foundation of all modern man's cultures and activities. It is what allows the billions of humans to live, and to do so in relative peace and prosperity.

He said that there are issues in which there are clear alternatives to do right or wrong, and when those issue become before the public forum, those with solid information about why something is right to do should come forward

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