

Farm Bureau Disappointed With PMMB Decision

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is extremely disappointed with the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board's (PMMB) decision not to increase the Class I over-or-

der price for Pennsylvania dairy-men facing higher feed costs because of this year's drought.

The PMMB voted 2 - 1 against a temporary 25 cents per hundred-weight over-order price increase which had been requested by Farm Bureau at a hearing on Nov. 27.

"We presented a pretty sound case at that hearing to show that Pennsylvania dairy farmers are in a bad economic condition," said John Bell, Farm Bureau's governmental affairs counsel. "The drought will impose substantial additional costs on dairy farmers in the coming months."

At the November hearing, Farm Bureau testified that dairy farmers will need at least an additional 37 cents per hundredweight for fluid milk to offset increased costs for purchased feed during the winter months. Farm Bureau had limited its request to a 25 cents price hike for the time period from January through May 1996 in deference to concerns by milk dealers and

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, December 16, 1995-A21

dairy cooperatives over market inroads by out-of-state milk dealers. Farm Bureau's request was based on a survey of dairy farmers conducted by its Farm Management Services.

The over-order price is a state-wide addition to the fluid milk price established for producers in the six regional milk marketing

areas of the state by the PMMB.

The PMMB's decision means the over-order price, which had been at 80 cents per hundred-weight up until August of this year, will decrease from 60 cents per hundredweight to 50 cents on Jan. 1, 1996. A hundredweight equals 11.6 gallons of milk.

Farm And Agribusiness

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- The agribusiness community needs to look at itself as a complete food and fiber system, rather than just independent components, and be mutually supportive.
- Maintaining national leadership in mushroom production and science depends on a strong partnership between Penn State and the mushroom industry, so that the key issues that threaten the industry in the future can be addressed through research and education.
- The nursery and landscape industry support a continued relationship with the Cooperative Extension and would like a strengthened educational program.
- The forest industries see a need for more professionals in the wood products area, as secondary manufacturing expands to add value to the primary timber product.
- Recognizing that land-grant universities can no longer afford to offer state-of-the-art teaching, research, and extension programs in every area of agriculture, as may have been done in the past, there should be coordination with other nearby land-grant universities so that no area of agriculture is without teaching, research and extension support in the Northeast.
- The organization and objectives of the faculty in the College must change dramatically to remain viable and move into the 21st century.
- Because of its dominance in the national market, Pennsylvania's mushroom industry should be a priority in upgrading research facilities and recruiting research faculty to support a strong research program in mushroom production and processing.
- While maintaining a balance in basic and applied research, as well as teaching and extension responsibilities, there is a need to adequately fund various departments whose programs are such that higher operating costs are required.
- Biotechnology research programs should be balanced with programs that respond to both present and future needs of agriculture.

MUN Test Provides

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"The traffic doesn't like us out there, and we don't like to be on the road with farm equipment either," Doug said.

Since 1988 they have farmed very little grain, using the land to produce forage and pasture for the cows. Both tie stall and a free stall barns are used to house the cows. A TMR mix is used. The ration includes corn silage, oat silage, dry shelled corn, soybean meal, and high moisture corn. Additional feed is top dressed for cows milking over 60 pounds.

Milk production herd averages

have been over 20,000 pounds for a number of years, but production seemed to have reached the top level.

"When the first MUN test results came back, I knew very little about the numbers," Doug said. But I saw we were in the recommended range. So, I thought, "Oh, good! At least we know where we stand."

But their feed consultant, Jeff Bogus from the Center Hall Farm Store, had other ideas. The initial MUN test showed the herd was not wasting feed. But at 12.1 points they were at the low end, and Bogus suggested an increase in protein to see if it made a difference in the tank. It did.

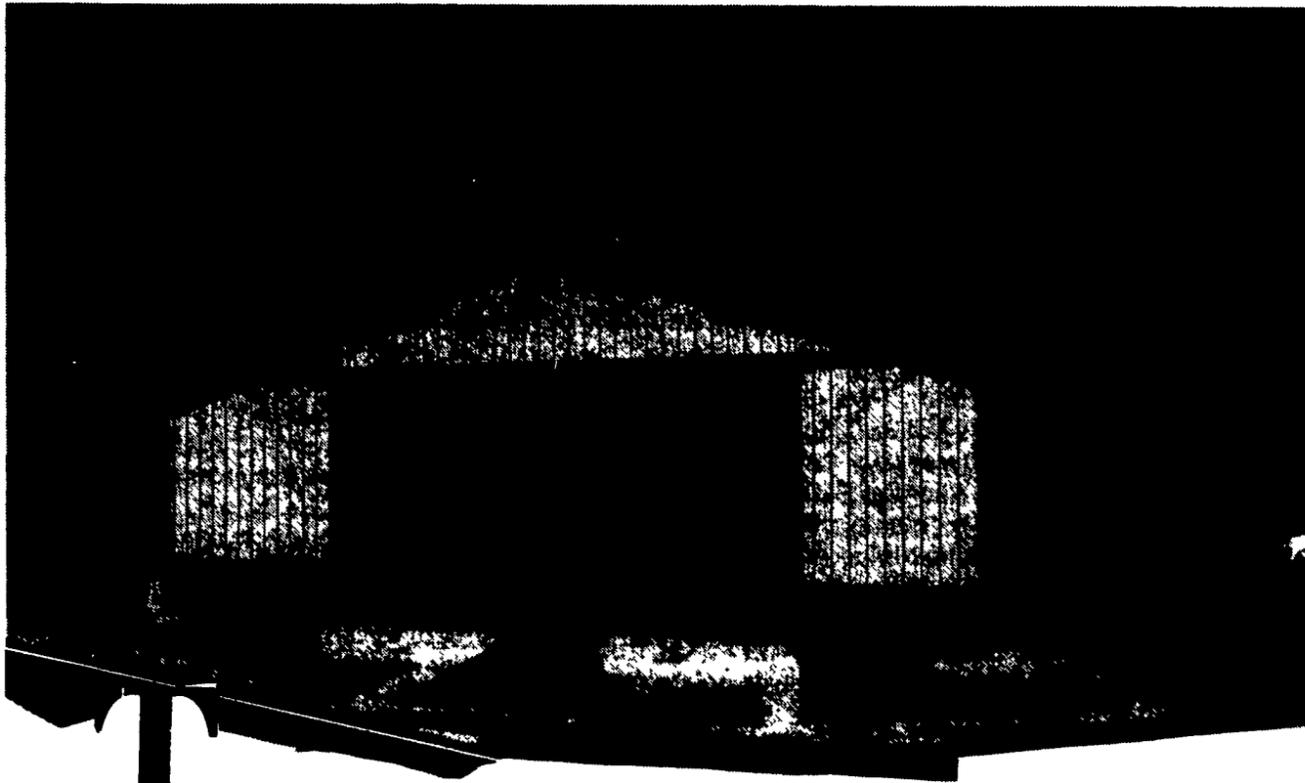
Within two weeks, production increased by three pounds per cow per day. And while the next MUN test came in at 16 points, they were still within the safe range, and the Rimmeys had a nice return on their investment in both the MUN test and the extra pound per cow per day of protein they fed the cows. Adjustments are still being made to see if they can fine tune the feeding program even more.

"Hopefully, I will know more in a few months or a year," Doug said. "But what we see is very interesting. We were forage testing and feeding in line with the results of these tests. But with MUN testing you can zero in closer to see where you are overfeeding or underfeeding."

As Doug and his wife Belinda, and their children, Nathan, 17, and Brandi, 13, become the succeeding generations on the Tussey Ridge farm, technology and new ways of doing things make a business of farming unheard 50 years ago. But it's farming as a business that allows the Rimmey family's love of the land and the farmers' way of life to be realized into the future. Put the old loves and the new ways together and you get the true meaning of what it really means to have a "family farm."

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