

## Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders Move Forward With Task Force Initiatives

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Sixty-five representatives of the Pennsylvania dairy industry agreed at a meeting here on January 9 to support two task force initiatives that are designed to enhance the profitability of the dairy industry in Pennsylvania. Meeting as the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders, participants represented all segments of the dairy food industry including dairy farmers, processors, milk cooperatives and dealers, farm and dairy food service and supply companies, farm organizations, and dairy promotion groups. Legislative, government, and education interests also attended.

Meeting chairman, Ralph Hefner, said, "The mission of the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders is 'to facilitate the viability and expansion of the dairy industry in Pennsylvania.'" A Core Leadership Group, comprised of 11 representatives of the industry,

received approval for the formation of two task forces: one titled "Economic Education Task Force" and a second called "Regulation Task Force."

The leading objectives of the Economic Education Task Force are: 1. To support and enhance a positive image of the state dairy industry both internally and externally — to consumers, communities, developers, support industries, regulatory agencies, and legislators; 2. To examine ways in which to enhance the competitive position of the dairy industry in Pennsylvania; 3. To enhance dairy farmers' ability to provide a good income and lifestyle for the dairy farm family; and 4. To help set an environment in which dairy farmers view change as an opportunity.

Dr. Ted Alter, interim dean of Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences said, "Dairy farm profitability is critical not only to

the individual farm family, but also to the greater community and state. All citizens have a stake in our rural and farm financial well-being."

Co-chairs of the Economic Education Task Force are Dr. Milton Hallberg, interim Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Penn State, and Donald Schriver, CEO of Milk Marketing Incorporated. Volunteers for this Task Force include: Carl Brown, F.M. Brown's Feeds; Gary Dean, Purina Mills; Robert Donaldson, Lebanon Valley National Bank; Jan Harding, PA Dairy Princess Program; William Hughes, CoreStates Bank; Dieter Krieg, editor of FarmShine; John Ligo, dairyman; David Morrow, veterinarian; Betty Reibson, dairyman and county commissioner; Harold Shaulis, dairyman and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau; Dave Slusser, Pennsylvania DHIA; and Bob

Thomson, dairy farm director of MMI. Additional persons may be recruited to carry out the Task Force objectives.

The leading objectives of the Regulation Task Force include: 1. To conduct a full and comprehensive review of the regulatory climate that currently affects the Pennsylvania dairy industry; and 2. To identify specific rules or regulations within the dairy industry that inhibit future growth or present impediments to expanding the industry's ability to effectively compete regionally and nationally.

Co-chairs of the Regulation Task Force are Dr. John Becker, Professor of Ag Economics at Penn State, and Michael Suever, Marketing Executive for Atlantic Dairy Cooperative. Industry volunteers for this task force include: James Dell, PDA; Earl Fink, PA Milk Dealers Assn.; Lewis Gardner, farmer director of MMI; Tra-

cey Jackson, PA Milk Marketing Board; John Nikoloff, Capital Associates; Jack Padley, Mid Am. Dairyman; Lori Sandman, Dairy Network Partnership; and Joel Rotz, PA Farm Bureau.

The Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders is an outgrowth of efforts by the dairy industry, Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, to provide a unified voice in ensuring the future health of Pennsylvania's largest agricultural industry. To date the organization has no formal structure.

A committee of Philip Kimmel, Keystone Farm Credit; DuWayne Kutz, Sire Power; Earl Fink, PA Milk Dealers Association; Joe Graybeal, dairyman and Lancaster DHIA; and Gary Rickard, dairyman and President of Sire Power, has been named to study and recommend a formal structure.

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## State Farm Organizations Want USDA To Continue Dairy Support Activities

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new way to discover the Basic Formula Price for milk.

"As the leading farm organization for one of the top dairy states in the nation, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau will be strongly involved in this issue."

In addition, it was announced that Harold Curtis of Warren County, chairman of the PFB Dairy Advisory Committee, has called an emergency committee meeting to discuss the milk price crisis and to consider other avenues for improving milk prices for Pennsylvania dairymen.

### Petitioning PMMB

Further, in Pennsylvania, the State Grange and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau both have called upon the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board to hold a hearing on the level of the over-order premium it can make for producers.

Both have stated that they are seeking to request the PMMB to not automatically eliminate a current 30-cent premium in April, as is currently planned.

That 30-cent premium was tacked on last fall because of the record-setting corn and grain prices.

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Both have stated that they are seeking to request the PMMB to not automatically eliminate a current 30-cent over-order premium on April 30, as is currently scheduled.

That 30-cent premium was tacked on to a 50-cent regular over-order premium last fall because of the record-setting corn and grain prices.

As it is, on top of the cheese price effects on the milk price, the premium would revert to 50 cents from the current 80 cents after April 30.

The Grange is seeking as a minimum a maintenance of that 80-cent premium.

According to Shambaugh, the Grange sent a letter to O. Frank De Garcia, executive secretary of the PMMB, requesting a statewide hearing on the over-order premium.

"We were concerned with the scheduled decrease on April 30 and with dairy prices at an all-time low, at least for the past 15 years, we felt a decrease in the over-order premium would be a disaster,"

Shambaugh said.

"The dairy industry is in a crisis situation and anything the PMMB can do to alleviate the situation would be beneficial to Pennsylvania's dairy farmers," she said.

The PFB has taken a similar stance.

"Our farmers have already suffered a \$3.76 per hundredweight reduction in federal order prices since last October, with February's prices expected to be further reduced by another 27 cents for a

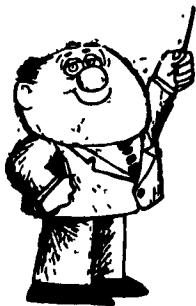
total reduction of \$4.03 per hundredweight or 27 percent of October's price," stated the petition filed by the PFB.

Its petition is seeking a hearing in early March.

"It is imperative that the (PMMB) review its decision to reduce the premium level to 50 cents for those months after April, in light of devastating reductions

recently endured by Pennsylvania dairy farmers in fluid milk prices," the petition stated.

"We believe an upward adjustment from the 50-cents over-order level is vital to the welfare of our state's dairy industry and will not place Pennsylvania markets at serious risk of loss to out-of-state markets," said Harold Curtis, chair of the PFB Dairy Advisory Committee.



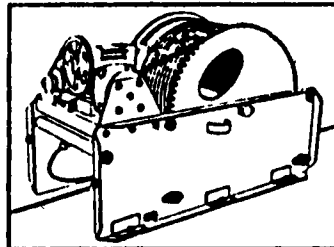
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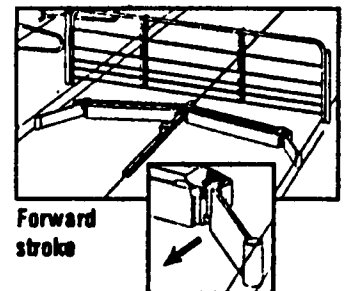
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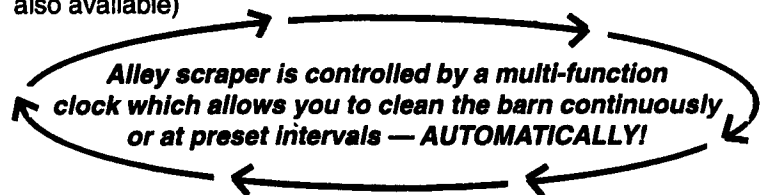
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