

Land O'Lakes OKs Merger

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discussions were in progress between the management of both organizations to develop a closer working arrangement. The hint of a merger was made then, though not held out as the explicit goal of talks.

More recently, the boards of directors of both organizations approved a merger plan, leaving the final decision of such a business move up to membership delegates.

ADC membership — through its elected delegates — is to decide on the merger on March 13, during a special delegate vote.

ADC members were to have been made directly aware of the voting procedures through a mailing by the co-op done early this week.

If ADC member-delegates approve the merger, it is to become effective on April 1.

Atlantic has been processing and packaging butter at its Mt. Holly plant in Carlisle for the Land O'Lakes brand since 1980 and has recently reported making a profit on the investment into the business arrangement.

ADC has been a growing cooperative and its members produce and market a large percentage of the milk in Pennsylvania.

For example, it grew in membership and marketing clout when it contracted several years ago to

supply the milk for the Pennsylvania operations of Hershey Foods, which was moving to eliminate its direct-purchase operations from local independent producers.

Those independent suppliers were given the option of joining Atlantic and continue to help supply the Hershey demand. Some did and some didn't.

Atlantic also subcontracts for milk with smaller dairy cooperatives, such as the Mt. Joy Farmers Cooperative.

That cooperative also received a boost in membership when former direct suppliers to Hershey sought to retain a local market.

ADC has also been working with the Rodale Foundation in a Dairy Network Partnership program.

The effect of a merger between ADC and Land O'Lakes on current ADC alliances and business relationships with other cooperatives is unknown, though Laura England said Thursday that it was expected that those contracts and agreements would be maintained.

In the joint Land O'Lakes/ADC news release made this week, John Gherty, Land O'Lakes president and chief executive officer stated, "We are excited about this opportunity to maximize our butter supply close to our strongest markets while establishing a true national organization with membership on the East Coast, across

the Mid West and reaching to the West Coast.

"By creating value-added markets for members and delivering cost-effective, on-farm production programs, we strengthen our entire cooperative system and become better positioned for long-term growth in both domestic and international markets."

Land O'Lakes is a Minnesota-based food and agricultural cooperative owned by farmers, ranchers and member cooperatives in 20 states. It provides agricultural inputs for nearly 1,000 member cooperatives supplying 300,000 farmers; serves more than 7,000 direct producer-members; and manufactures and markets a wide variety of food products.

ADC primarily markets raw milk. Both cooperatives handle about the same volume of milk annually.

In a recent comparison of the two cooperatives by Dr. George Haenlein, a long-time dairy professor and columnist at University of Delaware, through its value-added marketings, Land O'Lakes was able to generate about twice as much gross income on the sale of its producers' milk than what ADC was able to gross.

Survey Needs Horse Owners To Respond

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania has been designated as a study state for a national equine health study to be conducted by the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), a nonregulatory unit within the USDA. Veterinarians involved with the NAHMS are interested in having individuals allied with the horse industry help determine the study's focus.

The NAHMS has set up a telephone number and Internet address where individuals may respond to a short survey anytime before

March 15, 1997. Those who are interested in participating by phone should call 1-800-545-8732. Callers will be asked a short series of questions regarding the priorities for the study.

There is no cost to respondents, and the input gained by the study leaders will be invaluable in setting the focus for the study. The survey is open to all horse owners and has been advertised in several equine magazines. For more information call the Harrisburg office at (717) 782-3442.

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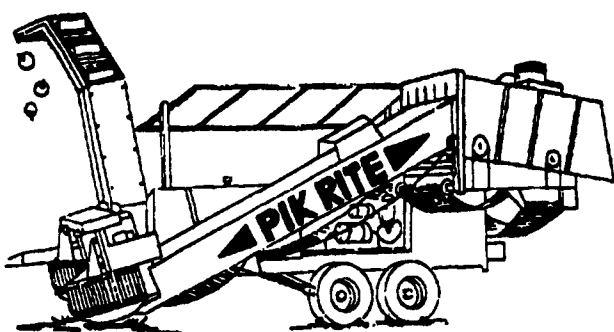
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