

Raw Milk Pricing Representatives Speak in Maryland

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Maryland Correspondent
Mt. Pleasant, Md. — Almost 100 dairy farmers and industry representatives attended an informational meeting here by a grassroots organization intent on raising the farm gate price of milk to producers. The American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association, Inc. (ARMPPA) is a Wisconsin based organization seeking to

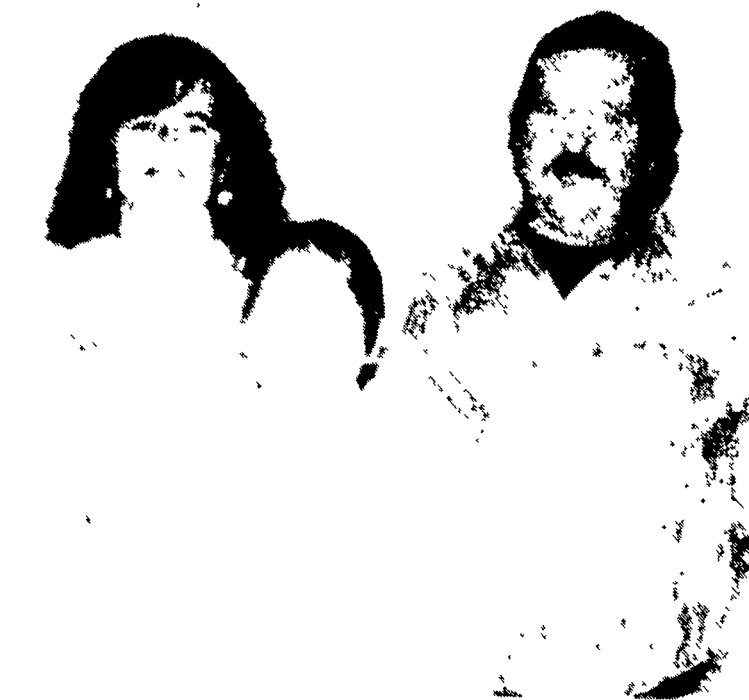
build national membership. Sponsored in Maryland by volunteer coordinators Eddie and Beth Boyer, dairy farmers from Jefferson, the meeting was held at the Ruritan Hall in Mount Pleasant.

According to John Kinsman, vice president of ARMPPA and himself a Wisconsin dairy farmer, the organization acts as a pricing agency, bargaining on behalf of its members to contract raw milk

before it leaves the farm at a price equivalent to the cost of production plus a profit. It essentially functions as a broker through which family farms can pool their milk to obtain optimum milk prices, making federal orders "irrelevant." The idea generated emotional debate among those at the meeting.

In order to effectively bargain for the higher prices ARMPPA must enroll members throughout the nation whose combined raw milk production amounts to 20% of domestic production, Kinsman explained. Members enroll by paying a \$20.00 membership fee and signing a contract now that goes into effect on the anniversary date of a farmer's current contract with his coop.

Once the critical mass of 20% of the milk produced has been enrolled in the association, ARMPPA will determine a price that is reasonable for the milk



Organizing the Maryland meeting were Eddie and Beth Boyer, dairy farmers from Jefferson, pictured with daughter Heidi.

based on cost of production figures. It will then approach the coops and offer them the option of either paying that price, or losing the ARMPPA members' milk. If the milk buyer refuses to pay the

set price, ARMPPA will contract the milk to a buyer who agrees to pay the price. ARMPPA members stand to gain bargaining power as more farmers join the organization and their milk becomes part of the pool.

Though not yet at the 20% goal they have set for themselves, ARMPPA members in Wisconsin are already seeing the benefits of the pricing agency, according to Joel Greeno, a dairy farmer from Kendall, Wisconsin, who spoke at the meeting. "So far agencies have been more than willing to pay the price and move the milk for ARMPPA members," he said. Greeno estimated 1,200,000 pounds of milk per day is being moved by the marketing agency. Mr. Kinsman stressed it was in the milk plants' best interest to work with ARMPPA instead of competing with it. "It's to their benefit because if we go out of business, they go out of business," he explained.

Delegate Paul Stull, commenting after the program, appealed to the dairy farmers to unite behind a bill that he could submit to committee in Annapolis. "Whatever the bill would be," he urged, "I encourage the dairy farmers to come to closure on whatever would be submitted. Get together on something, and please let your delegates know, because they need to know how you feel," he said.

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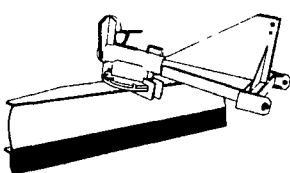


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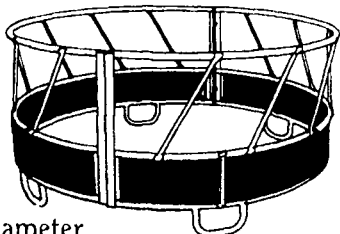
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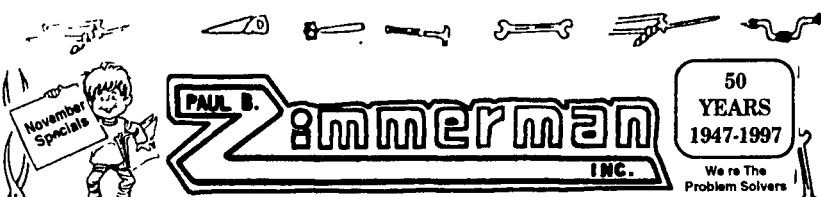
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