

What Weight Whey In Milk Value?

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NEWARK, Delaware — It's been our experience as milk producers that, if we sell milk from our University of Delaware herd milk through our marketing cooperative, for example at 59 percent fluid milk utilization, we will get a much higher price, than if we are subjected to a 43-percent utilization, as is the case now.

This is so, even though it is the same milk and has cost the same to produce.

Some years ago, some Delaware dairy herd's milk was sold to a processor in southern New Jersey at 85 percent fluid milk utilization. That was great, because fluid milk utilization fetches Class I prices — the highest — and non-fluid milk utilization goes for much lower Class II prices. This makes a considerable difference in dairy farm income for the same quality milk. For example, a 100-cow dairy selling 210,000 pounds of milk per month with \$13.90 for Class I and \$11.10 for Class II prices per 100 pounds of milk, when sold to that New Jersey dairy at 85 percent fluid milk utilization, the monthly income would be:

85% of 210,000 lbs. milk x 13.90/cwt = \$24,811.50

+ 15% of 210,000 x 11.10 = \$3,496.50

totaling = \$28,308,000

Later, when we all became members of the market-wide pool and a marketing cooperative, the fluid milk utilization was only 43 percent. The farm income changed drastically downward, even at the same amount and quality of milk per month:

43% of 210,000 lb. milk x \$13.90/cwt = \$12,551.70

+57% of 210,000 x 11.10 = \$13,286.70

totaling = \$25,838.40

The loss per month was \$2,469.60! Why? One reason is that market-wide, the dairy industry in this region seems to be unable to achieve a good level of fluid milk consumption, despite the great milk-mustache and other dairy promotions. Ads for soda and other soft-drinks continue to be more effective.

Another reason is that the Class II price is unfair to milk producers. Anyone in the cheese making and selling business has to concede that the profit potential for cheese is much greater than for fluid milk.

In the grocery store, special cheeses, for example, such as Brie, Gorgonzola, Peccorino or Emmental are all quite popular and not necessarily imported.

Look at the price/pound labels — some are as high as \$12/pound. Then figure out what that price means per 100 pounds of milk, because 10 pounds of milk make an average of 1 pound of cheese. At \$12-per-pound, the cheese price offers a nice return of \$120 per 100 pounds of milk. This is far from the \$13.90/100 pounds milk producers receive for fluid milk, and even farther removed from the \$11.10 producers receive for selling their milk for cheese making at Class II price.

Why? In part it's because many cheese makers throw out the whey — 9 pounds are left out of 10 pounds of milk that is used to make 1 pound of cheese. Many do not know what to do with whey, or it is too expensive to do anything other than to give it back to the farmer as feed for pigs or cows.

In other countries, this whey "problem" has been solved often elegantly and profitably, especially in countries that are poor and have limited resources, such as in parts of mountainous Norway, Greece and Italy. Norwegian farmers and dairy processors routinely use whey to produce their national favorite — Gjetost brown cheese — a cheese almost unknown in the United States outside Norwegian communities. In Greece, farmers make the deli-

cious Mizithra and Manouri cheeses from whey. These cheeses are totally unknown to non-Greek Americans, yet they are much tastier than U.S.-made cream cheese. Of course, Italians love and routinely make Ricotta from whey, even here in the United States, although it's not labeled or understood as a whey cheese, and is different from real cheeses made from precipitating milk casein.

The commercial uses of the valuable nutrients in whey are many, including lactose sugar in pharmaceutical and bakery products and whole dry whey to enrich bread with protein and minerals. Some soft-drink companies have used whey in carbonated beverages.

So, is whey an asset or a lia-

bility? It is high time that we rethink the Class I and Class II designations and prices for producers of milk from cows, goats, sheep and even water buffaloes. Give them the deserved credit for the much more profitable use of milk in cheese making and the whey-product market than for fluid milk consumption. Whey is a real but much neglected and underappreciated asset.

Finally, in the current debate about restructuring milk marketing orders and prices, let's rethink the fairness of Class I and Class II prices to our producers in relation to what the end-product retail prices are. We can argue strongly for a much higher price for cheese making Class II milk than for fluid milk Class I, because of the much greater profit margin in cheese and whey-product markets.

U. Of D. Promotes Four

NEWARK, Del. — The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Delaware (UD) announced the promotions of four individuals in recognition of their contributions to the college.

Susan S. Barton, cooperative extension specialist for horticulture, was promoted to extension specialist IV.

Teciemariam Weldekidan, de-

partment of plant and soil sciences, was promoted to associate scientist. Phaedra Tavlarides-Hontz, department of animal and food sciences, was promoted to research associate I.

Tracy L. Wooten, extension associate for vegetable crops at the Research and Education Center, was promoted to extension associate III.

"These promotions are a formal recognition of the professional contributions made by each of these individuals," said John C. Nye, dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "I am pleased that we are able to acknowledge their hard work and dedication."

A graduate of UD, Barton joined extension and the plant and soil sciences department in 1985 after receiving a master's degree in horticulture from North Carolina State University. Barton is a nationally recognized expert in the area of garden center management and merchandising. Current projects include work with the Delaware Department of Transportation and the Delaware Center for Horticulture on a roadside vegetation project.

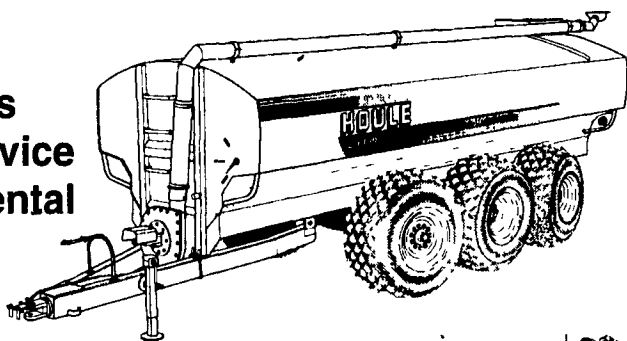
Weldekidan received an undergraduate degree in plant science from Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia and completed a master's in plant pathology at UD in 1989. He is a member of a research team that develops new corn inbred lines with increased yield potential, disease and insect resistance, and drought tolerance. Weldekidan works with undergraduates and high school students during the summer to encourage interest in plant breeding as a career.

Tavlarides-Hontz joined the staff in 1995 after earning a degree in animal science at UD. She researches the safety and efficacy of poultry vaccines for biologic companies throughout the country. Providing this service establishes the university as a trusted source of unbiased information, benefiting both poultry farmers and biologics companies.

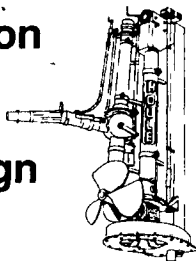
Wooten completed both her undergraduate and graduate work in plant science at UD. She plays an active role in commercial vegetable production in Delaware, joining the Sussex County Extension office in 1988. She is the editor of the "Weekly Crop Update," a newsletter for area growers that focuses on topics related to vegetable and agronomic crops. Wooten is president of the UD Agricultural Alumni Association.

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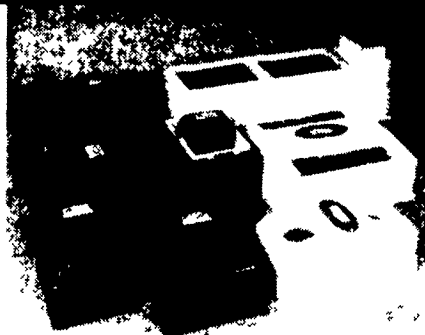
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