

Dairy Promotion Trends

Strong Cheese Sales Trend Continues In 2000

Last year's strong cheese market appears to be continuing well into 2000. Commercial disappearance of total cheese increased 9 percent in the first two months of the year compared to the same time period the year before, according to USDA figures. In the retail sector, Neilsen Research reports that, through mid April, retail cheese sales increased 5.5 percent compared to the same time period the year before.

Total cheese sales have increased by an average of 3.5 percent a year for each of the past eight years.

DMI vice president of cheese marketing Dick Cooper reports that one reason for the continued success of cheese sales is the integration of cheese marketing programs managed by DMI on behalf of the farmer-funded dairy checkoff.

"We're seeing a growing awareness of cheese resulting from the 'Ahh, the power of Cheese'" advertising campaign," Cooper said. "Plus, we have stronger participation by food retailers and processors, increased cheese featurings by national restaurant chains and strong public relations efforts, including the current 'Good Morning with Cheese Recipe Contest' featuring the TV personality Mr. Food. All of these elements working together result in a significant impact on the market."

Schools Increase Milk Consumption, Win Computer Prizes

More than 5,000 schools across the country competed in the 1999-2000 "Cartons for Computers" contest to see which school saw the largest increase in milk consumption among its students.

Two Grand Prize-winning schools received \$10,000 in computer equipment and \$2,000 in foodservice equipment. In addition, 25 regional prizes of \$2,000 in computer equipment and \$500 in foodservice equipment were awarded to schools that had the largest milk consumption increase in their region.

A special award was pre-

sented to an Indiana high school for executing the most creative in-school promotion of the contest. The plan included different milk-themed activities and special events, such as the "The Sound of Moosic Day," when the school's music class greeted fellow students with milk songs and jingles upon their arrival to school that morning.

"The 'Cartons for Computers' program not only teaches students the bone-building benefits of milk, but also gives schools an opportunity to win computer equipment as an incentive and helps educators teach students strong technology skills," said Kurt Graetzer, CEO of the Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP).

"Teen-agers are putting the health of their bones at risk when they choose soft drinks over calcium-rich milk," said Linda Racicot, executive vice president of domestic marketing for Dairy Management Inc., which manages the farmer-funded national dairy checkoff. "By drinking at least four glasses of milk a day, teens can help build healthy bones to help prevent the risk of osteoporosis in the future."

Dairy May Help Dieters Lose Weight

Lowfat dairy foods may help control body fat, according to a study published in the May 25 Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) Journal.

"We have shown that a diet rich in lowfat dairy foods affects the way in which fat cells do their job," said the study's lead researcher Michael Zemel, Ph.D., department head and director of nutrition, Nutrition Institute, University of Tennessee. "A diet high in lowfat dairy causes fat cells to make less fat and turns on the machinery to break down fat, which translates into a significantly lower risk of obesity."

In the study, four different diets were administered to separate groups of mice. The diet highest in lowfat dairy foods yielded the greatest results in helping control body fat. To apply these findings to the American human population,

the researchers analyzed the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III) data set. After controlling for caloric intake, physical activity and other factors, researchers learned that body fat was markedly lower in people who consumed more dairy.

Further evidence of the dairy/weight loss connection was presented at the 2000 Experimental Biology Annual Meeting in April. Separate re-

search from the University of Tennessee showed that diets high in lowfat dairy foods reduced body fat by 69 percent. Additional research from Purdue University presented at the 1999 Experimental Biology annual meeting examined the calcium intakes of women ages 18-31 during a two-year period. That study found that women who obtained their calcium from dairy foods lost more weight than those who used non-dairy sources or supplements.

Zemel's study was conducted in part to substantiate a link between lowfat dairy and body fat reduction first noticed nearly ten years ago in a study of African American men. Although the objective of the earlier study was to examine the role of a dairy-rich diet in reducing hypertension, the results also showed that adding two cups of yogurt reduced participants' body fat by an average of about 11 pounds.

Santorum Maintains Push For Key Agriculture Funding

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) recently sent a letter to the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee asking for his support for key funding for Pennsylvania. Santorum is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Santorum wrote to Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN), chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. Lugar will be integral in the final funding package for agriculture that is approved by Congress.

Santorum wrote, "...it is my understanding that the conferees will also consider the issue of how to spend \$7.1 billion that was authorized for emergency farm assistance under the budget resolution. As conferees begin forging this package, I would respectfully call to your attention the following items of strong interest and concern to me.

"First, I would encourage your continued support of minor and specialty crops. As we have seen in previous emergency assistance packages, the lion's share of assistance continually goes to large program crops to the detriment of specialty crop producers. While last year's emergency assistance package was a step in the right direction, there is a remaining need among producers in the Northeast who are still recovering from last year's devastating drought. I strongly encourage the conferees to dedicate adequate assistance

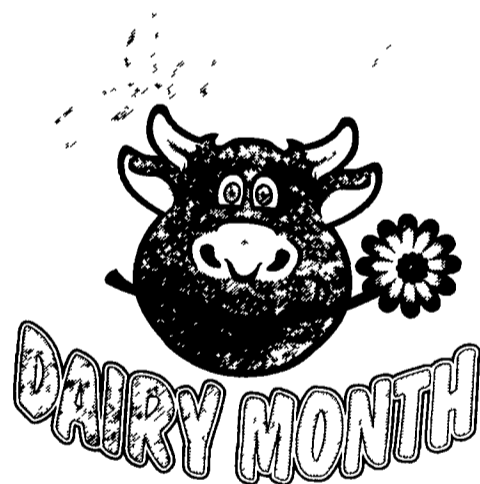
for specialty crops. Second, it is imperative that we continue to help our nation's dairy farmers who are receiving the lowest prices for their milk in 20 years. Given the inherent variability that accompanies dairy farming, these sustained, depressed prices only compound the financial position of dairy farmers. As the commonwealth of Pennsylvania's number one industry, dairy production is an important part of our economic and social fabric.

"Finally, I ask you to keep in mind the serious threat confronting the stone fruit industry in Pennsylvania, and across the nation, with the discover of plum pox virus (PPV). The affected growers in Pennsylvania were recently compelled to push out and burn their infected peach trees in order to destroy the virus. Despite early and ongoing efforts to secure compensation for removal and eradication, it has not been forthcoming. A small invest-

ment by the federal government is a meaningful step in containing the virus while compensating growers for their loss of trees and production."

Santorum's letter is his latest push to achieve vital agriculture funding. Recently, Santorum and Sen. Arlen Specter announced that the Senate Appropriations Committee has adopted legislation that authorizes the secretary of agriculture to award emergency compensation to farmers whose crops have been destroyed by the plum pox virus. The committee also approved \$1.1 million for research into the plum pox virus.

In March, Santorum and Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI) proposed legislation to provide \$500 million in emergency aid to dairy farmers who suffered severe economic losses in the past year. Last August, Santorum introduced an amendment to the fiscal year 2000 appropriations bill to ensure that Pennsylvania producers received a fair deal.



Water problems on your farm?



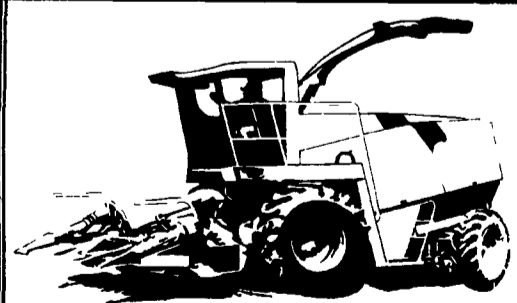
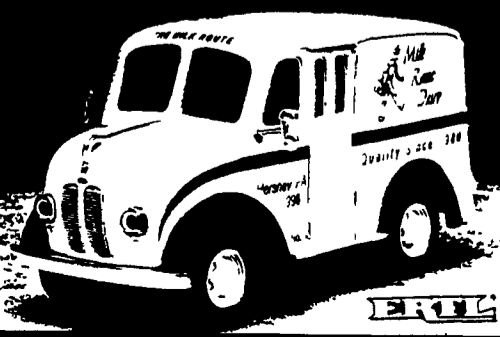
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