



**FARM FORUM**

**Editor:**

Despite what some people may say, the large majority of consumers are very concerned about the continuation of our family dairy farms.

Naturally, these concern runs extremely high in towns such as Tunkhannock, Montrose, Wellsboro, Berwick, Carbondale, and Honesdale. In areas such as Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, and Pittston, the concern also is very real.

However, it may be a surprise to some people, but our contacts with several consumers in New York City (especially Brooklyn) clearly indicate that many consumers in the big cities are knowledgeable of the severe problems being experienced by area family dairy farmers.

Many consumers show some of the greatest concerns from New Jersey.

These consumers are very concerned and upset as they witness so many farmers being forced out of the Garden State. (Less than 200 dairy farmers left in New Jersey).

During the last 26 months we now have talked to 110,000 consumers, and only six have disagreed with us concerning the dairy situation.

In addition, Pro Ag cooperated with the Scranton Catholic Diocese in the late fall of 2000 and delivered 12,000 signatures of consumers to Senator Specter's office, Senator Santorum's office, and Congressmen Don Sherwood's office in Scranton.

Since that time, several Protestant churches are now cooperating with Pro Ag and we have obtained about 7,000 more consumers names. All these consumers are strongly urging congress to take immediate action to alleviate the inequities facing dairy farmers.

The consumers ask me various questions, but probably the three most dominant questions are:

1. In a supermarket, why does a gallon of milk with a nonmajor brand name sell for \$2.87 per gallon and three-feet away a gallon of Deans Food milk sells for \$3.25 per gallon (38 cents a gallon more). The \$2.87 is the minimum price set by the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board. (Guess who bottles the non-

major brand milk?)

2. With the crash in the wholesale price of butter, then why is Land O'Lakes butter selling for \$2.89 per pound and butter at Aldies selling for \$1.69 per pound?

3. Why are the consumers in some stores paying \$15 for a five-pound block of American cheese, when you can buy a five-pound block of cheese in Marty's store in Meshoppen for \$8.50?

Consumers are really shocked when I tell them that the price farmers received for the milk used for cheese all across the U.S. in November was \$8.57 per cwt. (74 cents per gallon). This was the lowest price since 1977.

It's no wonder that consumers are upset and are demanding changes.

I'm going to list some of the comments by consumers.

• Mark Abushady-Queens, N.Y. — People in New York City are becoming well aware of the plight of our dairy farmers. We must keep our family farms in existence, and not allow corporate farms to take over our food supply.

• Jack Coslett, Trucksville, Pa. — It's unbelievable what's happening to our dairy farms. It's nowhere near right.

• Sandra and Denise McCofey, Brooklyn, N.Y. — Saving our family dairy farms is a worthy cause. Let's not industrialize everything. God bless our family farms.

• Kathy from Wilkes-Barre, Pa. — Many people keep paying higher prices for cigarettes. Why can't dairy farmers get a fair price?

• Robert Becker, Philadelphia — Even in Philadelphia we know that dairy farmers are hurting, and something has to be done.

• Robin Warner, Montrose, Pa. — Where do they think America started?

• Nancy Clark, Lake Winola, Pa. — I love milk, and I want my milk produced locally, I'll pay any price for milk, and I drink three glasses a day.

• Evelyn Van Fleet, Bartonville, Pa. — What's happening to our farmers is incredible. It's terrible. I get very upset about it.

• Kay Veirds, Scranton, Pa. — If, it wasn't for you guys, we

would starve to death.

• Ivan Boner, Alaska — I'm just learning about this stuff and it really gets me rowed up.

• Tony Matsavage, Carbondale, Pa. — It's about time something is done about our dairy farmers.

• Jean Schame, Madisonville, Pa. — I'll do anything to help the dairy farmers.

• Kristine Luvall, Dunmore, Pa. — I want to see the farmers get a fair shake.

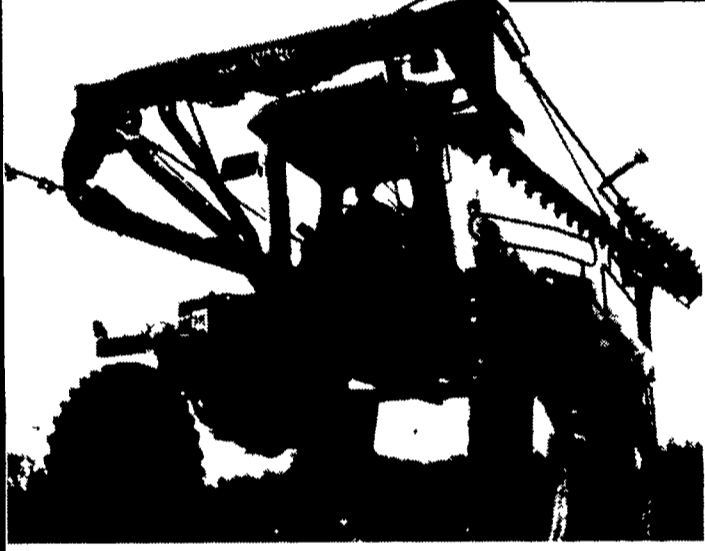
• Christine Sauers, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. — I don't think they realize how much they need you guys.

Finally, 6-year-old Sara Mattina said, "Daddy, how can we help save our family farms?"

These are just some of the comments made by consumers. I hope our senators and congress people are listening!

Arden Tewksbury, Progressive Agriculture Organization Meshoppen

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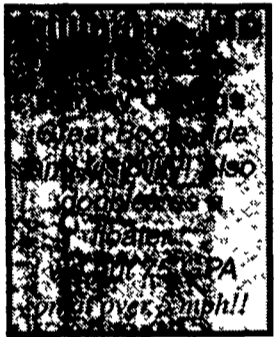


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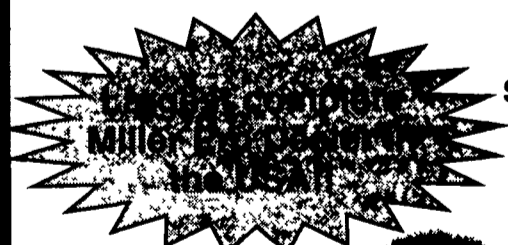
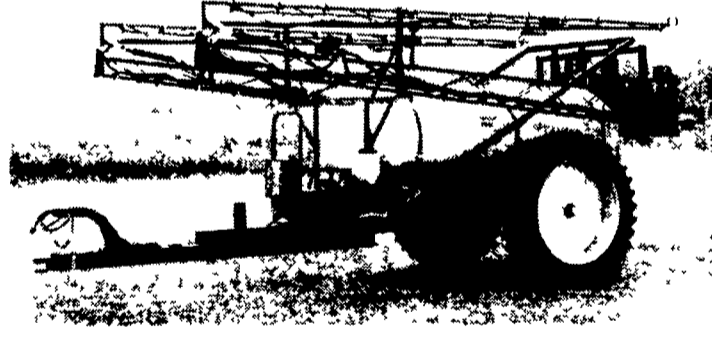


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