



FARM FORUM

still in compliance with the law for obtaining a plan by following the necessary steps within the regulations, such as signing the proposed proof-of-request form.

Let me take this opportunity to remind you that there is also cost-share assistance available for the use of private sector certified nutrient management consultants in the development of your nutrient management plans. The cost-share is available through MDA's Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS) and covers up to 87.5 percent of the development cost of the plan, depending on the type and size of the operation. For more information on this program, or for a list of certified nutrient management consultants, contact MDA at (410) 841-5959.

The bottom line is that Maryland Cooperative Extension personnel are committed to serving the needs of their communities and will make every effort to assist in your compliance with the law. We will continue to provide outstanding, individualized attention in as timely a fashion as possible for as many producers as possible, given our finite

resources and contract arrangement with MDA.

Thank you for your patience and understanding, and for utilizing the resources of the Maryland Cooperative Extension. We look forward to assisting you.

— Thomas A. Fretz

Dean and Director
College of Agriculture
And Natural Resources
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Extension
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long as a good faith effort was made to attain the services of a certified nutrient management adviser. That good faith effort includes providing to MDA proof that certified nutrient management adviser services were requested at least 60 days prior to the first plan development deadline of December 31, 2001, and that circumstances beyond the operator's control prevented completion of the plan by that deadline. MDA is developing a form to serve as proof of request for a plan, to be signed by your certified nutrient management adviser. Currently, however, the law still requires implementation of the appropriate nutrient management plan by December 31, 2002, without a provision for delaying imple-

mentation.

Many counties do have the capability to service the needs of their constituents within the given plan development timeframe. Some, however, are accumulating waiting lists due to such circumstances as an extraordinarily high demand, finite resources, or new hires that need time to be properly trained. The numbers of counties and the lengths of the waiting lists are likely to grow as more producers request assistance.

If you are a producer in a county with a waiting list for nutrient management plan development, simply sign up with your county extension office. If a certified nutrient management adviser will not be able to develop your plan by the deadline, he or she will make sure you are

Editor:

As dairy farmers, we often hear of the regional bickering over dairy compacts. We often hear blame cast on midwestern politicians for trying to block dairy compacts.

However, the enemies of dairy compacts are numerous and diverse. The rhetoric has heated up greatly in the past months. I believe we need to know who they are and what they are saying.

Americans for Tax Reform call it a milk tax, saying that Congress has given waiver to compact states to overcharge consumers for a gallon of milk. (By the way, the average price of a gallon of whole milk in Boston averaged \$.06 lower than the na-

tional average in 1999.) They claim that retail milk prices have inevitably escalated 20-30 cents per gallon. (The actual cost has been \$.08 for class I. The rest of the retail cost has resulted from passed on percentage margin plus increased margins.)

They claim that the South wants to form a compact if for no other reason than to protect themselves from a glut of milk pouring out of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact area. This is simply ludicrous. They have notified every member of Congress that a vote for compacts will be considered a vote against taxpayers.

Citizens against Government Waste blame the compact for surplus that cost the taxpayer

\$500 million last year in government purchases. Obviously, they did not investigate where these purchases were made or the impact of imports in creating oversupply.

Human Events and The Washington Times carried an article that called dairy compacts "Lactose Leninism." This article blamed the compact for overproduction, which splashed in the face of midwestern farmers. (From 1997-2000, U.S. milk production increased more than seven percent, the increase in the compact states was 2.9 percent.) The article called for GOP to remove the dairy compacts from their big tent. It also warned that abandoning the GOP position will result in Republicans getting "their oxen gored."

A common theme is that the poor won't be able to buy milk for their children. They never say that three percent of the compact premium goes to the WIC program and one percent goes to the School Lunch Program. Nor have I read any of the opposition admitting that the current "market price" is higher than the compact price, thus the current premium is zero. None have mentioned the danger that market concentration poses as evidenced by Jewel and Dominicks milk pricing scandal in Chicago last summer, that fixed retail prices nearly a dollar higher than other cities in the region.

One of the most disturbing themes in all the articles that I have read is the weaving of exact figures presented in Ken Balley's Missouri Study on Compact. This is seen as the model study by the opposition of compacts and the economic theories are carelessly applied as facts to describe what has resulted from the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact and why it must be eliminated.

Although dairy compacts may not be the best answer to dairy's problem, the lies and distortions leveled against it must not go unchallenged.

— Gerald Carlin
Committee Chairman
Pennsylvania Dairy Policy
Development Committee Of
Family Farm Defenders



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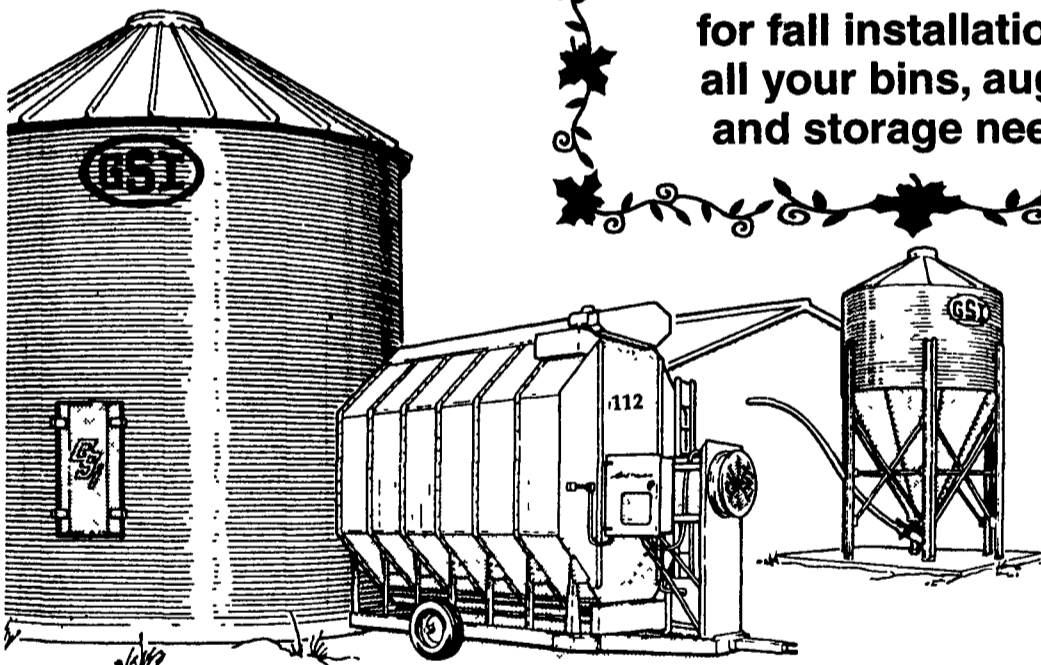
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