



❖ FARM FORUM ❖

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tion of a state order and to instead improve dairy farm profitability by increasing per-cow production and by lowering somatic cell counts. He used skewed statistics to support these recommendations, and his final piece of imparted wisdom to Minnesota was to amend local statutes and zoning regulations to promote dairy herd expansion.

Fortunately, several of those in attendance called him on his inaccuracies and withholdings of fact. His standard reply was "Good point. I'm glad you brought that up." Really, and what if they hadn't? Am I to believe that Bailey was not aware of these crucial points?

For Bailey, Feb. 9's meeting followed the conclusion of a week-long tour sponsored by Monsanto for the purpose of promotion of futures and forward contracts. I find it amazing that Bailey can support a program that encourages lower, flatter raw milk prices while on the other hand he attempts to discourage a state effort that would lead to a more accurate means of determining market prices for manufactured dairy products and at the same time encourage interstate commerce cooperation among leading dairy states.

As a dairy farmer, I follow dairy issues closely, and as a result have attended numerous meetings hosted by Bailey. I have found that he consistently supports a philosophy promoting global trade and elimination of any local, state, or federal price enhancement provisions.

The time has come for Penn State to rein in Dr. Ken Bailey. Until this happens, he will continue to give the commonwealth a bad image as he promotes his aggressive views for a deregulated, global dairy industry.

Is it too much to ask to start hearing the truth from Penn State's Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology?

Cyrus S. Cochran  
Dairy Farmer  
Westfield

Editor:

Adolph Hitler once said, "It is great luck for rulers that men do not think." Looking back, it's safe to say that Germany would have been a much different and better place in the 1930s and '40s if Germans had thought for themselves and acted on what was right.

Today it might be said that it is great luck for multinational agribusiness that many people do not think for themselves. One way to stimulate the thought process is through asking questions.

For example: Is the rapid pace of agribusiness mergers a good thing? Do fewer competitors in-

crease competition? Why are corporations and cooperative extension holding joint meetings with farmers? Why is the dairy industry pushing forward contracting so hard when farmers are not likely to gain? Is it because they are seeking a captive supply of milk?

Do they envision a day when dairy farmers will own facilities and shoulder the risks while corporation X will own the cows and dictate management procedures? Why is there a continual push for larger dairies when there is growing concern about the environmental impact of CAFOs? Why do ag economists encourage expansion when both Cornell University and University of Wisconsin studies found that the lowest cost of production among top herds was in herds of less than 150 cows?

Why is a higher milk price for large dairy farms justified by dairy industry strategists while they ignore the Capper-Volstead Act, which envisioned small farms jointly marketing milk to obtain a fair price? Who will be able to buy the large megadairies in the future? Are land-grant ag economists on corporate retainers? If so, why?

Since farm Class I price for milk in Boston was \$1.46 per gallon in January 1998, while retail

was \$2.60 and farm Class I price was \$1.31 per gallon in January 2002, while retail was \$2.99, how does Ken Bailey's "Standard Mark-Up Model" work? Why does Penn State and the milk processing industry strongly defend Ken Bailey while farmers are critical of his work?

Why does officialdom continue to push biotech when many nations keep our ag exports out as a result? These are only a few of the many questions that need answers. The most important question is, why do so few people speak out?

— Gerald Carlin, Dairy Farmer  
Meshoppen

Editor:

I am compelled to write this letter after what I had witnessed this weekend.

My husband and I attended a benefit auction for a fire company. Just like any other benefit auction for any other fire company or school, they were selling everything from soup to nuts, horses to equipment, etc.

As usual, I like to watch the horses being harnessed and worked around the track. Now, I have seen my share of accidents with horses, I know the dangers of being around things like that. But what I am about to tell you is something that should not have happened.

One of the sellers was harnessing up his horses. As he brought out this standardbred, I noticed the horse was a little quick. Not afraid, just quick. There were two men holding the front of the horse and the other man hooked him up to the sulky. No sooner did the man in the sulky ask the horse to walk, the horse bolted. In the process of running away, the horse ran over an elderly gentleman. This was definitely an accident that could have been prevented.

I feel that the responsibility for this accident lies with the fire company and the seller of the horse. Isn't the seller aware of what he is selling? Doesn't the fire company want to conduct a safe sale, so folks come back?

The auctions advertise these sales and bring in all types of people. There are horse people and city folk attending. There were children and elderly, babies in carriages — anyone who has attended one of these sales know what I am talking about.

I am just appalled over the whole episode. It seems to me that their only concern is for how much money they can bring in and it doesn't matter how they do it or who gets hurt. What is it going to take for these people to see the light? Someone to get killed?

— A concerned reader

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