

Weekly Dairy Market Outlook



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very new to the villagers. They associate co-ops with collective farms, even though co-ops are the opposite of a collective farm. Many don't fully understand the commitment that is needed to manage the cooperative. Even more alien is the idea that all the villagers share in the profits of the enterprise.

This is the last column for my weekly dairy outlook report for 2002. I will be enjoying some time with my family. I will also be reflecting on all

the positive things we take for granted living in the U.S. We assume every time we turn on the faucet, raise the thermostat, and open the refrigerator door that there is water, heat, and food.

That isn't so in much of the rest of the world. Imagine spending the entire winter with very little heat! Trust me, it's not much fun.

Let's hope we start the new year with lower dairy inventories and higher milk prices. Have a great holiday season with your families!

Pa. Cattleman's College Well Attended

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — On December 14 approximately 100 cattlemen from across the state traveled to the Foftrees Resort. State College to attend the Pennsylvania Cattleman's College

Despite a heavy ice storm the night before, an enthusiastic crowd was on hand to listen to a variety of speakers during the daylong event.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Terry Etherton, Department Head of Dairy and Animal Science at Penn State University. Etherton discussed the influence of biotechnology in animal agriculture.

"Biotechnology dates back more than 1,000 years, the first plant hybrid was developed in 1719," stated Etherton. However, the modern era of biotechnology is recognized as starting in 1973.

Dr. Etherton mentioned the numerous benefits of biotechnology ranging from improving efficiency to environmental benefits. In closing he noted, "Public perception is the key to the support and development of biotechnology in agriculture."

Following Dr. Etherton's presentation, attendees were invited to attend four of nine seminars on topics including: the livestock evaluation center, marketing purebred bulls, new products in estrous synchronization, keeping the family on the family farm, retained ownership of feeder calves, where did my checkoff dollar go, nutrient management

laws, best grazing systems for PA beef cattle, or freezer beef liability and regulations

Producers also had the opportunity to attend the Pennsylvania Beef Council (PBC) Annual Meeting to learn about checkoff programs in Pennsylvania. After the day's sessions, attendees were invited to a beef and veal product reception hosted by the Pennsylvania Beef Council.

OPINION

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to pay higher prices, make phone calls, and even vote in such a way as to protect the source of their food, and farmers who have no such convenient reservoir of local support. This factor, I believe, made a big difference in the recent legislative debate, as I am aware that many farmers who opposed SB 1413 asked their customers to help make the case.

Denial of the contrast between old and new models of farming is pervasive, and is beginning to threaten the integrity of all farmers here and abroad. Embedded within this denial is the learned forgetfulness that industrial agriculture is only "profitable" in the context of huge government production subsidies, artificially low energy prices, and long-term environmental damage. Such are some of the hidden costs of today's food supply that bring little benefit to average farmers.

The time has come to admit what members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives now know very well, that there are distinctly different views of agriculture being advocated across the state. Let us now initiate a statewide dialogue aimed at achieving mutual understanding and, perhaps, some common strategies for addressing important issues such as farm profitability, environmental protection, animal welfare, and the wellbeing of our rural communities

We have a perfect opportunity for such a dialogue to begin, with a new state administration about to take office. "If not now, when? If not us, who?"... as the saying goes. Governor Ed Rendell should make this matter a top priority of his new administration

I challenge other farm organizations in Pennsylvania to join us in this call for meaningful dialogue in 2003 and the years ahead. Furthermore, let us agree that such dialogue must embrace not only the diversity among farmers, but also the needs and interests of rural communities and individual consumers, including those who happen also to be township supervisors, or who fit into one of Mr. Pechatka's convenient categories

The message sent out early on Thanksgiving morning when the legislature refrained from taking action on SB 1413 is that the status quo in Pennsylvania agriculture is no longer suitable as either a voice or a vision for the future. Our lawmakers now realize that diversity within the agricultural community is as natural and desirable as is biodiversity in our fields and forests

And what all of us should realize before it is too late for Pennsylvania's 60,000 family farms is that the next agricultural revolution will come about as a result neither of legislative action nor the development of new technology, but in response to the urgent desire of millions of consumers everywhere to be more closely connected to the sources of their food



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