

Mount Joy Co-Op Honors Members At Annual Meetings

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — Mount Joy Farmers Co-op conducted annual meetings for dairy producer members this week, with leaders reporting a positive year for the co-op in 2002.

The banquet meetings took place Tuesday and Wednesday at Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland, and East Fairview Church of the Brethren, Manheim.

Manager Dale Hershey reported producer members shipped 540,032,999 pounds of milk, up 7.2 percent from the previous year. Milk prices dropped to an average of \$13.65 per hundredweight — \$2.46 lower than 2001 levels.

The co-op signed on 36 new producer/members last year. With a number of members also selling their herds in 2002, the co-op totaled 327 members at the

year's end — a net gain of six members.

Hershey said milk price projections for the first months of 2003 show little change. Higher prices in later months, however, should bring the year's average prices up about \$1 a hundredweight, he said.

Member equity in the co-op continues to decrease, with average equity standing at \$1,727, or 66 percent less than that invested by members five years ago.

That's a positive trend, according to Hershey. "It's not our goal to have a lot of your money tied up in the co-op," he told members.

Hershey pointed out a decrease of 2 cents per hundredweight in the net costs of running the co-op, an improvement largely brought by lower milk-hauling costs. New fuel storage capacity has allowed the co-op to save on bulk fuel purchases.

Milk production in the co-op is expected to go up this year, both from current members shipping more and from new farmers joining, according to Hershey.

"Prospects look good for the coming year," he said. "As of January 1, production levels have really taken off."

The co-op projects an increase this year of at least 4 percent in pounds of milk shipped.

Mount Joy Co-op recognized a number of producers for good management and milk quality.

Lawrence Z. Good of Womelsdorf, Berks County, received the superior management award for 2002.

Sixty-two producers were honored for receiving 12 consecutive months of quality premiums. Sixteen of these also ached at least one inspection during the year, entitling them the co-op's "inspection honor roll." These 16 were Lester B. Weaver, Lawrence

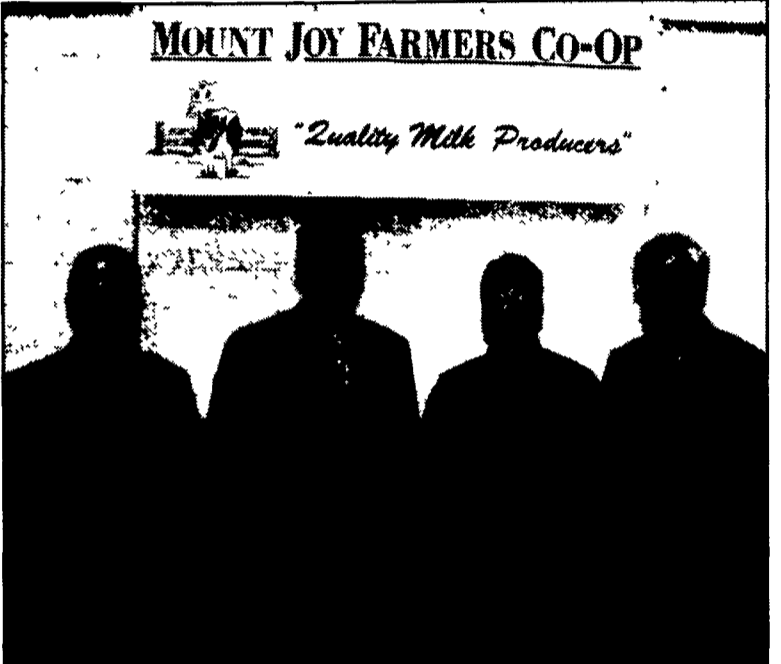
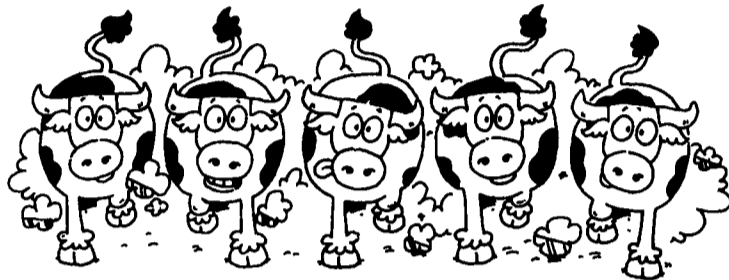
Z. Good, Leon S. Lauver, Leroy H. Hoover, Paul E. Horning, Reinford Farms, Amos F. Stoltzfoos, Lester Z. Nolt, Kenneth L. Balmer, Kenneth L. Harnish, Jay L. Wise, Walnut Run Farms, Jason E. Glick, Samuel S. Stoltzfoos, Gerald C. Neal, and Marlin S. Lauver.

Other speakers included Don Risser, president of the co-op, Brett Rigby of the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association, and John Siglow of Dairy Marketing Services (DMS), the agency formed in a joint marketing venture between Dairylea and Dairy Farmers of America cooperatives.

DMS handles all of Mount Joy Co-op's milk marketing, along with that of a number of other, smaller member co-ops and independent co-ops.

Siglow said that DMS supports a \$1.50 over-order Class I premium for milk produced, processed, and sold in Pennsylvania. DMS made the request at a hearing this week before the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB).

DMS is also asking the PMMB to review its proposal that the premium be pooled statewide.



Mount Joy Farmer's Co-op reported a positive year in 2002 despite low milk prices and other challenges. Pictured, from left, are Gib Martin, fieldman; Dale Hershey, manager; Jeff Witmer, head trucker; and Don Risser, president.

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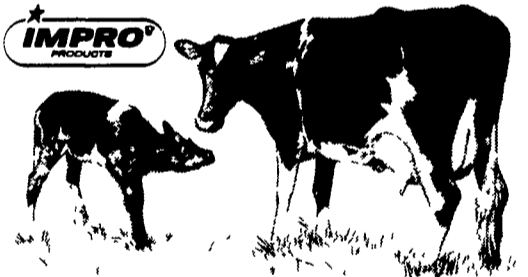
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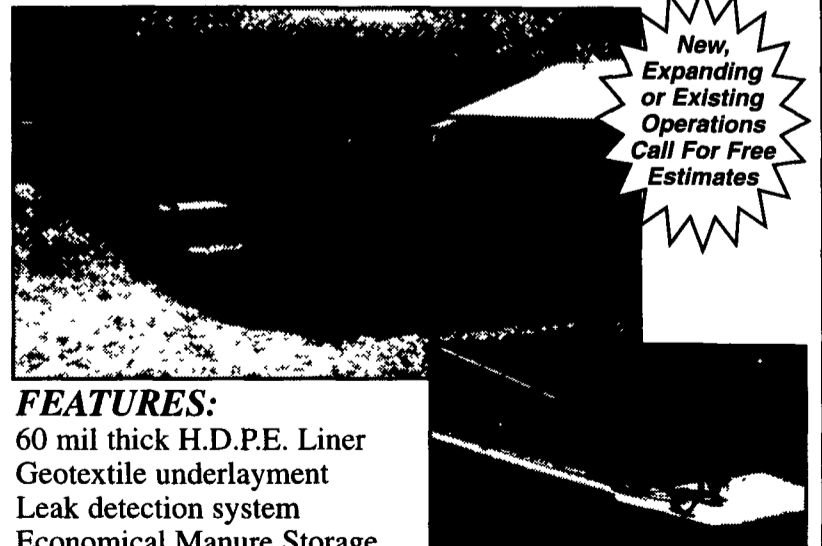
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