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MARKETING MILK UNDER FEDERAL ORDERS

Federal milk marketing agreements and orders are authorized by Congress and administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. They are designed to promote orderly marketing in the sale of milk by producers to handlers or milk distributors and to assure consumers an adequate milk supply.

Orderly marketing of milk is sought by defining in advance the terms for both buyers and sellers. These terms are developed mainly through public hearings, in which producers, handlers, and consumers have an opportunity to participate. Once an order is in effect, information regarding supply and demand is collected and made available to all interested parties.

Some Texas dairy farmers have been marketing milk under Federal orders since October 1951, according to Randall Stelly, Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Sociology at Texas A. & M. College. In December 1959, a total of 5,270 dairymen in the State — or 68 percent of the milk producers — sold milk under seven Federal orders. (See accompanying map showing Federal milk marketing order areas in Texas and adjacent counties of Oklahoma.) In 1959 these producers marketed more than 1.8 billion pounds of milk, which is nearly three-fourths of the volume of whole milk delivered to plants and dealers by Texas dairy farmers.

A basic function of Federal milk marketing orders is to establish minimum prices to be paid by handlers for milk delivered by pro-

ducers. This procedure includes classifying and pricing milk to handlers according to the use made of it. Products of similar value are grouped together, with a minimum price established for each class. The highest minimum price usually is set for Class I milk, which is used for fluid drinking purposes and commonly called Grade A milk by consumers. The quantity of milk in excess of that needed to fulfill Class I requirements for a particular market is used in the manufacture of dairy products — such as cheese, condensed milk, etc. — and brings lower minimum prices.

The various minimum class prices also are adjusted for differences in butterfat content of the milk, and adjustments often are made to reflect differences in the value of the milk in various locations within the market area and for different seasons of the year. Proceeds from the milk sales are distributed among producers by a pooling arrangement specified in the marketing order.

A Federal milk marketing order applies to a specific marketing area, which is defined in each order and usually includes an area in which major distributors compete with each other for sales, according to Mr. Stelly. Some of the major milk markets in Texas that are not regulated by Federal milk marketing orders are: North East Texas, the Greater Houston area, the Lubbock-Plainview area, El Paso, and the Rio Grande Valley area. However, the prices which producers receive for milk in these areas are influenced by those established in adjacent Federal order markets.

The United States Department of Agriculture recently recommended establishment of Federal milk marketing orders to regulate the handling of milk in the Lubbock-Plainview and the Rio Grande Valley marketing areas of Texas. Tentative orders are being submitted to producers and handlers in these areas for exceptions or comments. If issued, the marketing orders would establish minimum prices to be paid by handlers to producers who supply the milk which is distributed in the proposed areas of regulation. However, the orders would not regulate retail prices.

Under a Federal order, handlers within the market area are the only ones regulated. A handler usually is defined as any firm which purchases approved milk from farmers to sell in the marketing area. Handlers must pay the minimum prices, make accurate weights and tests, and account for the way in which the milk is used. The market administrator, who is the local Government official responsible for administering the order, requires handlers to submit detailed reports to assure compliance with the provisions of the order.

The milk market administrator's principal duty is to be sure that handlers account for their milk receipts and pay the producers in accordance with the terms of the order. The handlers' records are audited by the market administrator's staff, in order to make sure that full payments are made to the producers.

According to Mr. Stelly, the following are some of the more common limitations of Federal milk marketing orders.

1. They do not guarantee a given price level for the milk. Prices are determined to reflect supply and demand conditions; to assure an adequate supply of pure, wholesome milk; and to be in the public interest.
2. They do not set resale prices.
3. They do not guarantee farmers a buyer. Handlers are not required to purchase milk from a particular producer.
4. They do not control production or prohibit milk produced in any area from being marketed in any other area.
5. They do not establish sanitary standards. Each order is constructed according to the sanitary regulations of the local governing bodies.

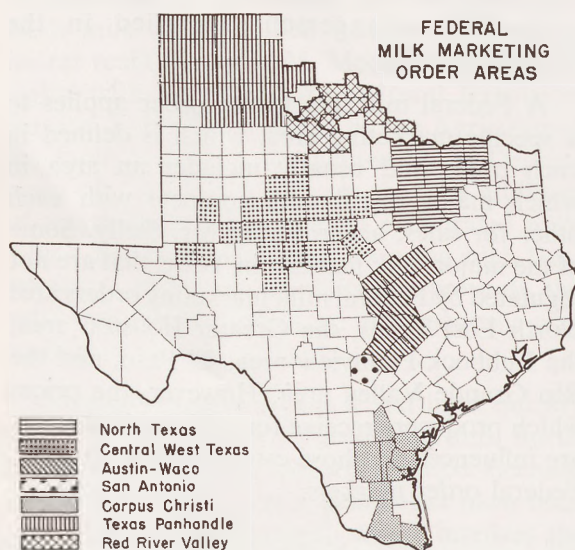
Bird Repellents for Grain Sorghums

A cooperative study to evaluate three chemicals for repelling birds from mature grain sorghums was initiated in the summer of 1959 at College Station, Texas, between the Agronomy Department of Texas A. & M. College and the Denver Wildlife Research Center of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. The three chemicals used in the study were Arasan 42-S, B-187, and B-188.

A total of 16 plots was included in three tests conducted at different times during the growing season. The first and second tests — which included six plots each — were initiated on July 1 and August 5. A third test, on four plots, was started on August 19. Each test was conducted for 2 weeks.

A treatment rate of approximately 65 gallons of chemicals per acre was used in the first test, while a rate of 140 gallons per acre was used in the other two tests. In order to standardize the number of birds feeding on the area, a cage containing eight English sparrows was placed over each of the 16 test plots.

The tests show that Arasan 42-S is the most effective chemical for repelling birds from sorghums and B-188 is the least effective. Sor-



ghum treated with 1 to 5 percent Arasan 42-S had the highest average threshing percentage and little or no feeding damage, while that treated with 5 to 11 percent active B-188 provided only slight protection from birds, compared with untreated sorghum. B-187 was superior to B-188 in repelling birds, but only the sorghum treated with 11 percent active B-187 had a threshing percentage as high as sorghum treated with Arasan 42-S. The effectiveness of each chemical in repelling birds varied according to the severity of the particular test in which the repellent was used.

Users of Arasan 42-S should keep in mind that it is a "zero tolerance" product which cannot be used safely with grain crops to be produced for livestock, poultry, or human food. The value of the chemical will be limited to protecting experimental plots and for seed crops where there is no possibility for the seed to get into food or feed uses.

Bermuda Grass Production in Northeast Texas

Bermuda grass — the most important pasture grass in northeast Texas — is best adapted to fertile loam and sandy loam soils but will grow under a wide range of soil conditions, according to the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

Of the Bermuda grass varieties tested for adaptation to northeast Texas, Coastal Bermuda grass has shown the best performance, yielding 20 to 50 percent more forage than Common Bermuda grass. Other varieties that have been tested but which are not superior to Coastal Bermuda grass include Midland, Suwanee, and Selection No. 3. NK-37, a seeded variety, was inferior to Coastal Bermuda grass in a preliminary test made in 1960.

Coastal Bermuda grass responds favorably to nitrogen fertilization and interplanted winter legumes, as well as to a combination of these practices. Even during drought years, Coastal Bermuda grass responded favorably to annual applications of 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre. The practice of seeding an adapted winter legume increased total forage production about the same amount as did the application of 60

pounds of nitrogen per acre without the legume. Moisture has not been a limiting factor in northeast Texas since 1956, according to the experiment station.

Coastal Bermuda grass which has been overseeded in the fall with crimson clover and fertilized about June 1 with 120 to 150 pounds of nitrogen per acre has yielded 10,000 to 12,000 pounds of forage per acre annually in the area. Without the clover, this volume of nitrogen produced 8,000 to 9,000 pounds of forage per acre. The use of the legume without nitrogen yielded about 7,500 pounds of forage per acre annually. The planting of clover results in earlier production of forage than does Coastal Bermuda grass without the legume. Consequently, the best practice appears to be the use of a winter legume, followed by nitrogen applications about the time the legume matures.

The period of peak forage output is influenced, to some extent, by the time the nitrogen is applied. Peak production periods can be shifted by delaying the initial nitrogen application; however, initial fertilization early in the spring may give a greater boost to output in a year when moisture is lacking in mid-summer. In studies conducted in northeast Texas on sandy soils, cultivation had no influence on Bermuda grass output.

Factors Determining Meat Tenderness

The tenderness of T-bone and round steak is as closely related to the protein composition of the meat tissue as it is to the animal's age, report scientists with the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station.

Analysis of the loin and round-eye muscles from 33 beef animals in five age groups has revealed that, as the protein content of the meat fibers increases, the meat becomes tougher. Although the size of the meat fibers increases with the animal's age, size is not always a good indicator of tenderness.

The scientists have found evidence that, as beef animals grow older, changes occur in connecting tissues, as well as in muscle tissues. Through further experimentation, they hope to discover the age at which the beef animal reaches maximum muscular development. This

factor, together with physical maturity, is the key to profitable beef production. At the same time, the consumer may be provided with tender, lean meat, according to the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station.

High Milk Sanitation Standards Urged

Some milk plants in Texas have reported difficulty with ropiness in their milk supplies. In a number of instances, the source of contamination has been traced to the dairy farm, says Dr. C. W. Richardson, Area Dairy Specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

Ropiness in milk generally is caused by a specific organism sometimes found in stagnant ponds or pools of water. Cows may carry the bacteria into barns on their legs or bodies. The organism may then enter the milk supply during the milking process. When barns and equipment become infected, the bacteria are difficult to eradicate, according to Dr. Richardson. The organism grows well in sweet milk at a relatively low temperature, and the ropy condition may not be apparent until the milk is in the consumer's hands.

Milk producers can help eliminate this serious problem by following a strict sanitation program. Udders of all producing cows should be washed thoroughly and wiped dry before the cows are milked. In addition, Dr. Richardson suggests that an acid cleaner be alternated frequently with the regular cleaning compound and that the milking system be disinfected thoroughly before and after each milking.

Predator Bounty System Not the Answer



Many Texas counties are still using the bounty system in an attempt to control predators, although there is good evidence that this system is ineffective, says Ed Cooper, Wildlife Specialist with the

Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

Under the bounty system, the county — or perhaps a livestock association — offers a reward for killing animals that occasionally prey

on livestock or crops, or create other problems. The reward ranges from 10 cents per head for crows to \$75 for large animals, such as wolves or coyotes.

According to Mr. Cooper, there have been few, if any, recorded instances where the offering of a bounty reduced predator numbers to the point where the problem no longer existed. Moreover, persons suffering losses from predators will attempt a control program, regardless of whether or not a bounty is offered. Another weakness of the system is that dishonest practices may occur. For example, people have been known to bring in coyotes killed in other counties in order to collect the bounty.

Satisfactory control programs can be developed with the same amount of money used in the bounty system, points out the wildlife specialist. The Texas Predator and Rodent Control Service employs professional trappers who perform effective predator control work. The program is a cooperative effort of the Federal, state, and local governments or organizations. County agricultural agents can furnish information on how to institute this program.

Plowing with Plastic

Covering plowshares with sheet plastic in order to prevent soil from sticking to them may be the answer to this perennial farming problem, according to engineers with the United States Department of Agriculture. When soil sticks to the plowshare, poor plowing results, tractor power is wasted, and much time is lost in cleaning the implement.

In USDA tests at Auburn, Alabama, mold-board plows covered with sheet plastic did an excellent job of shedding soil. Two plastics, Teflon and H. D. polyethylene, were effective in turning sticky, difficult-to-plow clay soil. Both of these plastics are extremely smooth, which makes it difficult for soil or other materials to adhere to them.

There will be 323 eggs, 7 pounds of turkey, and 25 pounds of ready-to-cook broilers for every man, woman, and child in the United States this year, reports the Economic Research Service.