

THE FOLLOWING TESTIMONY IS BEING SUBMITTED TO
THE
PENNSYLVANIA MILK MARKETING BOARD
BY ARDEN TEWKSBURY, MANAGER
OF THE PROGRESSIVE AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
September 2, 2020

Progressive Agriculture Organization (Like us on FACEBOOK!)

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My name is Arden Tewksbury of Meshoppen, Pennsylvania (Wyoming County).

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board:

Mr. Chairman, I'm again listing all of my past activities, but I'm not going to read them. I believe it is more important to relate to the serious financial problems that are facing the majority of dairy farmers in Pennsylvania as well as many dairy farmers across the United States.

*In addition to operating my dairy farm in Meshoppen Township, Wyoming County, Pennsylvania for over 50 years, I have also been involved with many farm organizations. In the 1960s I served on the dairy committee of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, later on I served on the dairy committees of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, and the Pennsylvania State Grange for several years. In the 1970s, I was elected to the Board of Directors of Eastern Milk Producers, which I served for 9 years. While there, I was on the Executive Board for 7 years, 2 years as Vice-President, and 5 years as President of the Co-op. During my term as President, we were successful in bringing Leprino Foods into South Waverly, Pennsylvania, which took care of a substantial amount of milk that many times was homeless. After leaving the Board, I served as assistant to the General Manager, and later on, I did consulting work for Leprino Foods. During the 1980s, I was hired to do membership and dairy work for the Pennsylvania Farmers Union and was named manager of the Northern Tier Farmers Union Co-op. I also became a director of the Regional Marketing Cooperative Agency and also the Regional Bargaining Agency. In 1985, I was named Granger of the Year for the State of Pennsylvania. In 1991, several dairy

farmers started the Progressive Agriculture Organization, which I have managed since that time.

Mr. Chairman, today in addition to representing the Progressive Agriculture Organization, I'm also representing the Dairy Sub-committee of the National Family Farm Coalition of Washington DC. I serve as Chairman of the Committee. The Coalition has other members in Pennsylvania in addition to Pro-Ag. Members of the Coalition come from at least 20 other states.

In addition to my credentials, I want to add that I have been a School Director of the Elk Lake School District for 59 years. I now have been elected to the Board of Directors of the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU) regional Educational Board. This Board oversees 21 schools in the northeastern part of Pennsylvania. One of the benefits of this position has allowed me to obtain the support of all of these schools to officially support returning whole milk back into the school lunch program. *

Mr. Chairman, Board members of the PMMB, along with the staff of the Board, I wish to thank you for allowing me again to make my views known to you regarding the hardships that many of the dairy farmers are facing in Pennsylvania.

Certainly everyone knows that prices paid to dairy farmers have been upside down during 2020. I don't ever recall seeing these types of prices. Unfortunately, not only have dairy farmers received these unorthodox prices but we realize that many dairy farmers are now being charged excessive marketing costs. This is all happening when figures from the Economic Research Service shows the national average cost of producing milk still hovers close to \$22 per cwt. It's sad to see so many of our local dairy farmers being forced out of business. In other testimony given to the Board during other hearings I

have illustrated the serious impact that our dairy farmers' prices are having on rural Pennsylvania and the rest of America. As I have said many times before, these low prices are not the fault of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board. The fault clearly lies on the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Congress for not taking corrective action to solve the dairy farmers' problems. One more time, I urge the dairy co-ops to illustrate to everyone how the premium money they are collecting is being used. Cooperatives certainly are not bashful at illustrating the marketing costs they are taking from their dairy farmer members. Actually, one key member of a large dairy cooperative told me recently the following: Arden, the day will soon be coming when we will have to reveal how the premium money is spent.

However, the most important part of my testimony is to review that Readington Farms announced on July 1, 2020 that they were announcing the increase to their over-order premium up to \$1.25 per cwt. Therefore, in order to maintain some equity in the premium structure in Pennsylvania, I strongly urge the PMMB to increase their premium up to \$1.25 per cwt. and I urge the dairy co-operatives to show everyone how they are using the money.
