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Louisiana Dairy Digest

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July-August 2004

Dairy Market News

Cary "Bill" Herndon
Department of Ag. Economics, Mississippi State University

July Advanced Class I Price Falls to $21.05/cwt.

Price volatility and uncertainty of dairy markets continue to rear their ugly heads as dairy farmers and milk processors strive to understand the demand and supply situation currently facing the industry. Dairy markets have already seen prices reach all-time record high levels in 2004 and are now witnessing a "market correction" in June and July as cheese prices fall dramatically. Whether these plummeting cheese prices are an "over correction" has yet to be validated by the market. But, the dramatic increases in both butter and cheese prices during the first half of 2004 has led to a remarkable surge in farm-level milk prices. As was the case for the past three months, Class I milk price remains well-above $20.00 per cwt. but this euphoria will be coming to a quick end as this market correction is incorporated in the market. Once again the July Class III Advanced skim milk price was the Class I mover (based on the value of skim milk used in cheddar cheese production) because it was greater than the corresponding Class IV price (representing skim milk value in butter and milk powder products). The USDA reports that the July 2004 Advanced Class III skim milk price was $10.95 per hundredweight (cwt.) compared to the Advanced Class IV Skim Milk price of $6.33 per cwt. The difference between these respective Class III and Class IV prices (after factoring in butterfat prices) resulted in a $4.46 per cwt. *higher* Class I base price ($17.95 versus $13.49). So, the USDA announced on June 16 that the July 2004 Advanced Class I "base" milk price would be $17.95 per cwt. (for 3.5% butterfat milk). After adding the $3.10 Class I price differential for the pricing zone which includes Atlanta and Starkville (Oktibbeha County) to this "base" price, the Advanced Class I milk price for July will be $21.05 per cwt. Producers in south Mississippi and southeast Louisiana can add another $.30 per cwt. bringing their Class I price to $21.35 for milk produced in July. Dairy producers need to remember that the July Class I price will be an important, but not the only, factor influencing revenues derived from the sale of their milk produced during the month of June. Since about 60-80 percent of Louisiana and Mississippi milk is usually processed into Class I products, settlement checks received in mid-August as the final payment for milk produced and sold in July will reflect this Class I utilization. This price will again result in zero ($0.00) Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) payments in August.

Advanced Class I Milk Price @ 3.5% B.F.	Price per Cwt. in in North Central Mississippi Zone	Price Difference Versus July 2004	Percent Change Versus July 2004
July 2004	**$21.05**	——-	——
June 2004	**$24.23**	**↓$3.18**	**↓13.1%**
May 2004	**$22.75**	**↓$1.70**	**↓7.5%**
July 2003	**$12.87**	**↑$8.18**	**↑63.7%**
July 2002	**$18.44**	**↑$2.61**	**↑14.2%**

Market Conditions. CONFUSION! There have been a variety of words used in this newsletter in an attempt to describe the general tone of dairy markets and outlook for the dairy industry. Recent months have deemed the use of a variety of concepts that range from tremendous excitement and delight to absolute bewilderment and perplexity. The exhilaration of record high milk prices has been replaced by dismay as dairy product prices plunged during late June. While the recent sharp decline in cheese prices appears to be warranted as a "correction," most analysts believe that this adjustment has gone too far and has resulted in an over-correction. However, Class I milk prices for July will again be in excess of $20 per cwt. and be reported at $21.05. Thus, milk producers will again enjoy much-improved farm-level milk prices but they will likely see their milk checks fall below the magical $20 per cwt. level when they get paid for their July milk output in mid-August. The dairy market is unquestionably confused as indicated by the fact that cash cheese prices fell sharply while Class III futures contract price increased substantially on several trading days during late-June, early-July. Product markets seem poised for their usual general increase in prices as the hot, humid summer weather begins to curtail milk output, but the exceptionally rainy conditions with its very mild temperatures across most of the U.S. has sustained milk production. Traders are also worried about how much consumers have reduced dairy product consumption due to increasing retail prices. So, the demand-supply squeeze that triggered record high milk and dairy prices earlier this year has altered its "stripes" and now market experts are wondering how to ascertain the current milk demand-supply situation. The good news is that market fundamentals appear to support cheese prices in the $1.60 per pound range. Thus, it is the opinion of this economist that the market can and will sustain Class I milk prices in the $17-$18 per cwt. range. Louisiana and Mississippi dairy farmers have definitely relished obtaining record high mailbox milk prices and milk sales revenues during 2004 and it appears they will be realize a much greater average annual milk price that should exceed $17.00 per cwt. for the year.

Milk Production. Once again, milk production declined for the 12th straight month in May 2004 as the number of milk cows in the national dairy herd continues to be reduced by several reasons. Of significant note, this month's USDA report indicated for the first time ever that national milk output fell during the same month in consecutive years. For instance, milk production fell 0.8% between May 2002 and May 2003 while decreasing 0.4% when comparing May 2003 to May 2004. A closer look at these statistics finds that the number of milk cows dropped from 9.104 million head in May 2002 to 8.982 million head in May 2004, or a decline of 167,000 cows (↓1.8%). Clearly, it has been the dwindling size of the U.S. dairy herd that has been the primary cause of diminishing milk output. Comparing May 2004 to May 2003 statistics finds that milk output fell because there were 122,000 (-1.3%) cows in the national herd while productivity per cow grew by 12 (+0.9%) pounds per cow, causing milk production to decrease 63 (-0.4%) million pounds. The major western milk producing states continue to challenge this national trend by increasing the number of milk cows on their dairy farms. The statistics show that California added 35,000 cows, Idaho increased their herd by 15,000 cows, and New Mexico's herd grew by 12,000 cows; which means that dairy cow numbers tumbled by 184,000 head in the other 47 states. Monthly milk production statistics are listed in the table below for selected states and the nation.

Comparing Specific TimePeriods, 2004 versus 2003	May Percentage Change in Production	May Percentage Change In Output Per Cow	May Percentage Change in Cow Numbers
U.S. Total	↓0.4%	↑0.9%	↓1.3%
California	↑2.1%	No Change	↑2.1%
Wisconsin	↓0.8%	↑0.3%	↓1.1%
Idaho	↑2.1%	↓1.6%	↑3.8%
New Mexico	↑1.2%	↓2.6%	↑3.8%
Indiana	No Change	No Change	No Change
Florida	↑4.0%	↑7.6%	↓3.5%
Kentucky	↓6.7%	↑2.7%	↓9.2%
Virginia	↓5.7%	↑6.6%	↓8.7%
Texas	↑6.4%	↑7.5%	↓0.9%

Congress Introduces Bills to Establish Regional Boards

Cary "Bill" Herndon
Department of Ag. Economics, Mississippi State University

National Dairy Equity Act

Legislation was introduced during June in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to significantly change national dairy programs in bills being called the National Dairy Equity Act (NDEA). Under the NDEA, dairy producer income would be supported through the collection of premiums on Class I milk sales and government payments. Class I premiums would be authorized by five regional boards that could establish a target Class I milk price up to $17.50 per cwt. on 50% of the milk produced in each region. In regions of the country where Class I utilization is greater than 50% (like the Southeast), the NDEA proposes that the difference be obtained from USDA/CCC funds. Many dairy industry personnel have compared the NDEA to setting up vehicles and mechanisms similar to the Northeast Dairy Compact across the U.S. under the management of the five regional boards. The NDEA also authorizes these boards to implement supply management programs while having some role in distributing monies collected as Class I price premiums.

The NDEA is a long way from certainty because there are many factions both within and outside the dairy industry that have expressed concerns and opposition to this proposal. Politicians and government officials in Washington, D.C. are very reluctant to establish policies and programs that appear to support farmers at the expense of consumers, especially women, infants and children receiving welfare. Consumers certainly do not support government-sanctioned programs that appear to increase prices for essential food items like milk and dairy products. Dairy processors were the most vocal opponents of the former Northeast Dairy Compact and will surely throw all their political power against the NDEA. Finally, several dairy producer organizations have expressed their disagreement with the NDEA because of the USDA's role in collecting and distributing the Class I premiums and how farmers' would have an effective role in managing the regional boards. In summary, the NDEA has a very difficult future with many obstacles to overcome before it has any chance to become a reality. But, dairy farmers need to keep abreast of any and all dairy policy and program developments because these will affect their future in the dairy industry. A copy of the proposed legislation along with its' potential impact in Louisiana and Mississippi is available on the web at http://www.ncagr.com/dairy_legislation/index.htm.

Bulk Tank Culture Results

Gary M. Hay, Dairy Specialist
Department of Dairy Science, LSU AgCenter

Dairymen have been asking us a lot of questions about the Mycoplasma sampling results from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF). Since this is a regulatory issue, the LDAF, is providing that information directly to producers who have a positive bulk tank result. We, as county agents and specialists with the LSU AgCenter, do not have access to the Mycoplasma sampling results. However, Dr. Bill Owens at the Hill Farm Mastitis Lab is also running standard (non-Mycoplasma) mastitis cultures using the samples being sent in for the Mycoplasma testing program. These culture results will identify major types of pathogens that are commonly associated with mastitis in dairy cattle. Two of these pathogens; streptococcus agalactaie and staphylococcus aureus are known and contagious organisms and are passed from cow to cow primarily through the milking equipment. Two other pathogens; environmental streptococcus or strep. species and coliforms are commonly found in the cow's environment such as in mud and manure.

These culture results can be used for preliminary diagnosis of potential infectious causes of high rates of clinical mastitis and high bulk tank somatic cell counts.

These results are **NOT** part of the Mycoplasma sampling program; they are a free service being provided to dairymen by the AgCenter. The AgCenter does not currently have the funding to mail a copy of these results to every dairyman every month. However, we CAN make the information available to any dairyman who would like to see the information. Call your county agent if you would like a copy of these culture results.

LSU AgCenter Dairy Verification Project
Treating Pre-Partum Dairy Heifers with Dry Cow vs Lactating Cow Antibiotics
Dr. Gary Hay, Dairy Specialist

Introduction
Recent research has identified treating dairy heifers with dry cow intramammary infusions approximately 60 days prior to calving as an economically viable management practice which can lead to lower post-calving intramammary infection rates, lower somatic cell counts and higher milk production during the first lactation. Another practice which is also currently being studied is treating dairy heifers with lactating cow intramammary infusions approximately 14 days prior to calving. An extension demonstration project was initiated at the LSU campus dairy farm during the fall of 2003 to further verify the results of previous research trials.

Materials and Methods
Thirty-three Holstein dairy heifers were randomly assigned to one of three treatment groups based on their age and calving date. All thirty-three animals were scheduled to calve between November 2003 and April 2004. Treatment 1 was a control group with no prepartum intramammary treatments. Treatment 2 was a lactating treatment group with each animal treated approximately 14 days prior to calving with one infusion of a commercially available lactating cow intramammary product in each quarter. Treatment 3 was a dry cow treatment group with each animal treated approximately 60 days prior to calving with one infusion of a commercially available dry cow intramammary product in each quarter.

Duplicate samples of mammary secretions were taken from each quarter of each animal in treatment 3 approximately 60 days prior to calving and immediately prior to treatment. Groups 1 and 2 were sampled approximately 14 days prior to calving and immediately prior to treatment for group 2. All animals were sampled approximately 5-14 days postpartum. Samples were sent to the Mastitis Research Lab at the Hill Farm Experiment Station for analysis. Analysis consisted of identification of specific microbiological organisms in each quarter sample. Microbiological data was summarized as number of quarters with a detectable microbiological infection pre and post treatment. Milk production data was Peak Milk, Summit Milk and Projected 305-day Actual Lactation Milk Yield as calculated by the Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) records. Somatic cell count data (linear scores) from the first three DHI test dates of the lactation were used to summarize effects of treatment on early lactation somatic cell counts.

Expected returns were calculated for each treatment group. Expected returns were calculated as the value of milk produced during the first lactation minus the cost of treatment. Value of milk produced was calculated as: (Projected 305-day Actual Production in hundredweights (cwt) X Milk Price). Milk price used was $15.00 per cwt.

Treatment costs were labor to infuse each animal plus the cost of medication. Labor costs were .20 hours X $10.00 per hour or $2.00. Medication cost for each animal was $6.68 for both lactating and dry cow medication. Total cost for treatment of each animal was $8.68.

Results

Microbiological Comparisons

	% Quarters Infected (All Organisms)		% Quarters Infected (Staph. Aureus)	
	Pre-Treatment	Post-Treatment	Pre-Treatment	Post-Treatment
Control	32.200%	25.000%	21.400%	10.700%
Lact. Treatment	25.000%	15.625%	6.250%	9.375%
Dry Treatment	56.250%	6.250%	12.500%	3.125%

Results (continued)

Average SCC (linear score) on the 1st 3 DHIA Test Dates

	1st Test SCC	2nd Test SCC	3rd Test SCC
Control	5.0	3.6	4.5
Lactating Treatment	3.7	4.1	3.7
Dry Cow Treatment	3.6	2.8	3.4

Average Milk Yield (lbs) and Product Value Comparisons

	Peak Milk	Summit Milk	Proj. 305-day Milk	Value
Control	77	73	18761	$2,814.15
Lactating Treatment	71	69	17840	$2,676.00
Dry Cow Treatment	83	79	20264	$3,039.60

Difference in Returns Over Costs

Dry Treatment vs Controls	($3,039.60 - $2,814.15) - $8.68 = $216.77
Lactating Treatment vs Controls	($2,676.00 - $2,814.15) - $8.68 = -$146.83
Dry Treatment vs Lactating Treatment	($3,039.60 - $2,676.00) - $0.00 = $363.60

Summary

Microbiological results indicated treating pre-partum heifers approximately 60 days prior to calving with a commercially available dry cow antibiotic substantially reduced the percentage of quarters infected post-partum over pre-treatment levels for both staphylococcus aureus and a combination of all organisms. Treating 14 days prior to calving with a commercially available lactating cow antibiotic slightly reduced the overall number of infections post-partum. However, the lactating cow antibiotic had little or no effect on the number of post-partum staphylococcus aureus infections. Control animals also exhibited lower post-partum infection rates for both staphylococcus aureus and a combination of all organisms; possibly indicating some rate of spontaneous cures in pre-partum infections. However, heifers treated with dry cow antibiotics had substantially lower post-partum infection rates than either controls or heifers treated with lactating cow antibiotics.

Heifers treated with dry cow antibiotics had an average of 6 lbs more peak and summit milk than controls and 12 and 10 lbs more peak and summit milk respectively than heifers treated with lactating cow antibiotics. Heifers treated with dry cow antibiotics were also projected to actually produce 1,503 lbs more milk during the first lactation than untreated controls and 2,404 lbs more milk than animals treated with lactating cow antibiotics. Heifers treated with dry cow antibiotics also exhibited lower test day somatic cell counts on the 1st three post-calving monthly DHIA test days than either heifers treated with lactating cow antibiotics or control animals.

Heifers treated with dry cow antibiotics were projected to potentially produce during the first lactation an additional $216.77 return over treatment cost as compared to untreated controls and $363.60 return over treatment cost as compared to heifers treated with lactating cow antibiotics.

These results appear to verify previous research in indicating pre-partum intramammary treatment of dairy heifers with a commercially available dry cow medication tends to reduce the number of post-partum intramammary infections, increase early lactation milk yield, lower early lactation somatic cell counts and substantially increase profitability during the first lactation. Pre-partum treatment with a lactating cow antibiotic also appeared to verify previous research which has found very little benefit in lowering early post-partum infection rates, increased early lactation milk yield and lower early lactation somatic cell counts. Please keep in mind this data was produced from a limited number of animals and was not statistically significant. Results from dry treating heifers in your herd may vary. A larger study is currently underway using heifers from the Hill Farm Dairy Research Farm, the LSU Campus Dairy and the Southeast Research Station.

National Animal Identification

Maxwell Lea, State Veterinarian
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

The outbreak of several livestock and poultry diseases and the single case of BSE (Mad Cow Disease) in Washington in recent months has accelerated the need to develop and implement a national animal identification program. The goal of the ID program is to trace an animal within 48 hours from its present location to all places it has been during its life. The information obtained will be available only to state and federal animal health officials in the event of a disease outbreak. Individual animal production data will also be valuable to producers to help upgrade and improve the quality of their animals.

The animal ID program will revolve around two sets of identification numbers: premise ID and animal ID. Premise ID is a number assigned to each location where livestock are maintained and animal ID is an individual number assigned and placed on each animal.

During the year 2004, allocation of premise ID numbers will begin on a voluntary basis. Identification of animals will follow. It is anticipated that a number of pilot or "trial" projects will be conducted before a full-fledged effort is made to include all premises and animals.

Emphasis is being placed on implementing the identification of cattle on a national basis. Other livestock species including horses will be included as the program progresses from stage to stage.

The animal ID program is a joint effort and includes state and Federal animal health officials, the livestock industry and university agriculture departments. In Louisiana, the Farm Bureau, Cattleman's Association, LSU AgCenter, the Livestock Market Association and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry are working together to develop a program that will fit the state's livestock industry and provide as much information as possible to everyone who will be involved. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of these organizations.

Dairy Science Club and Student News

Bruce F. Jenny, Head
Department of Dairy Science, LSU AgCenter

The Annual LSU Dairy Science Club and Dairy Alumni Banquet was held on April 24, 2004 in the Faculty Club on the LSU campus. Approximately 140 students, alumni faculty, parents, and dairy industry representatives were in attendance.

Each year two individuals are recognized for outstanding service and dedication to the dairy industry. This year two individuals from the dairy manufacturing industry were selected. Mr. Wayne Tucker, general manager of the Southern Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coast Territories of Borden Milk, was the recipient of the Dairyman of the Year award. Mr. Tucker began his career with Borden in 1968. He is the current president of the Louisiana Dairy Products Association and is a member of the "Le Lait" Golf Classic Scholarship Committee, which raises scholarship money for undergraduate students majoring in dairy science at LSU.

Mr. Donald Savage was recognized as Honorary Lifetime Member of the Dairy Science Club. Mr. Savage began his career in the dairy industry in 1965. He started his own company, Savage Sales, in 1974 and is a manufacturer's representative for several major dairy packaging companies. Mr. Savage has been active in the departmental scholarship program and has been a member of the "Le Lait" Golf Classic Scholarship Committee since 1994.

Twenty-two dairy science students were recognized as scholarship recipients for the 2003-04 academic year. Included were Jason Lavigne of St. Bernard, La, recipient of the Scholastic Achievement Award; Mark Konzelman of Kentwood, La., outstanding first year club member; Laura Ward of Abita Springs, La, outstanding senior club member; and Justin Roberts of Kentwood, La., outstanding club member.

The Dairy Science Club and members were also recognized at the annual banquet of the Agricultural Student Council on April 30. The Dairy Science Club was recognized as the Outstanding Club in the College of Agriculture and Dr. Cathy Williams, dairy club advisor, was recognized as outstanding club advisor in the College of Agriculture. Laura Ward, a senior from Abita Springs, La. was recognized as Outstanding Senior Female in the College of Agriculture.

TOP HERDS BY ENERGY CORRECTED MILK (ALL COWS)

NAME	DATE	BR	COWS	DIM	ECM	FAT%	PRO%	RHA
J PAUL ALFORD	5/3	H	115	172	66.3	3.4	3.0	20174
SE LA EXP STATION	5/17	H	209	167	64.9	3.5	2.9	21807
LSU DAIRY	5/7	H	70	194	60.5	3.6	2.8	19522
C JOHNSON & W LITWILLER	5/19	H	105	182	60.1	2.6	2.9	21893
FARMER'S DAIRY	5/6	H	44	210	58.6	3.3	2.9	18745
MARVIN FLETCHER	5/12	H	164	207	57.8	3.5	2.9	20070
J W DOC SCHILLING	5/20	H	129	133	57.4	3.3	3.1	16927
JOHN FAUNCE JR DAIRY	5/4	H	226	162	56.6	3.3	2.9	18026
CIRCLE G FARMS	5/19	H	154	169	55.5	3.5	2.9	17199
VICTOR WOMACK	5/1	H	109	119	54.9	3.4	2.9	11544
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	5/3	H	45	186	54.5	3.1	3.0	20486
BILLY ANDREWS	5/14	H	105	184	54.4	3.6	3.2	18949
O B MITCHELL	5/24	X	55	118	54.3	3.7	3.1	17597
RAYMOND SCHMIDT	5/10	H	80	188	52.3	3.1	2.9	16184
BROWN DAIRY FARM	4/30	H	196	201	51.9	3.3	3.1	17238
BOBBY GOINGS	5/7	H	114	177	50.8	3.6	3.2	17924
LADD BLADES	5/20	H	201	172	50.5	3.5	2.9	18675
GALEN NIGHTINGALE	5/19	H	73	237	50.1	2.9	2.9	20748
UDDER FRESH	5/14	H	113	174	50.1	3.1	3.2	17333
CLINTON STEVENS	5/5	H	124	202	50.0	3.1	3.1	15719
VERNON S BRIAN	4/29	H	273	246	48.7	3.1	3.0	13867
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	5/3	J	42	182	47.6	4.0	3.6	15507
PHILLIP ROBERTS	5/16	H	165	176	47.6	3.7	3.2	15915
RUSSELL AND RUSTY CREEL	5/19	H	83	190	47.4	3.3	2.9	16429
KARIE AND BRAD BLADES	5/27	H	171	319	47.3	3.4	3.0	18009
DARYL & MARYJO ROBERTSON	5/19	H	74	131	46.8	3.3	2.9	16384
HALL BURFORD	5/3	H	76	150	45.7	3.0	3.1	19183
HOLLIS BANKSTON & SONS	5/26	H	94	216	45.5	4.0	3.2	16785
TO-BEV FARMS	5/17	H	227	153	45.2	2.4	3.0	18397
PHILLIP ROBERTS	5/16	X	125	154	45.1	3.7	3.3	14166

TOP HERDS BY ENERGY CORRECTED MILK (ALL COWS)

NAME	DATE	BR	COWS	DIM	ECM	FAT%	PRO%	RHA
SE LA EXP STATION	6/15	H	209	181	59.2	3.8	2.9	22035
J PAUL ALFORD	6/2	H	115	173	58.7	3.5	2.9	20487
CLIFFORD CHAMPLIN	6/24	H	201	110	57.5	3.7	3.1	19705
LSU DAIRY	6/12	H	69	210	56.2	3.5	2.8	19677
C JOHNSON & W LITWILLER	6/23	H	105	206	55.2	3.1	3.0	21983
KIRBY VARNADO	6/15	H	86	187	53.4	3.8	3.0	20309
EUGENE ROBERTSON	6/28	H	170	204	51.8	3.4	3.1	19984
BILLY ANDREWS	6/17	H	104	213	51.7	3.7	3.1	18689
J W DOC SCHILLING	6/24	H	128	162	51.6	3.6	3.0	17243
BOBBY GOINGS	6/4	H	114	176	49.9	3.9	3.0	17706
VICTOR WOMACK	6/5	H	106	143	49.9	3.5	2.8	12021
NED SIMMONS	5/27	H	148	141	49.4	3.8	3.0	13441
LADD BLADES	6/17	H	200	190	48.6	3.3	3.0	18552
MARVIN FLETCHER	6/10	H	174	223	48.3	3.5	2.8	20167
PHILLIP ROBERTS	6/24	H	158	180	48.1	3.5	3.0	15808
FARMER'S DAIRY	6/7	H	44	239	47.4	3.3	2.9	18971
RUSSELL AND RUSTY CREEL	6/25	H	82	164	46.7	3.4	2.8	16495
DUSTY SCHILLING	6/16	H	97	171	46.5	3.0	2.8	18446
GALEN NIGHTINGALE	6/17	H	74	259	45.8	3.0	2.9	20556
CLINTON STEVENS	6/2	H	122	218	45.1	3.5	3.0	15935
JOHN FAUNCE JR DAIRY	6/1	H	230	187	44.9	3.4	2.8	18200
BROWN DAIRY FARM	6/15	H	192	223	43.6	3.5	3.0	16799
IVERY REED	6/17	H	70	224	43.5	3.2	2.9	13396
M & B DAIRY FARM INC.	6/9	H	132	195	43.1	3.6	2.9	13802
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	6/2	H	43	220	43.0	3.2	2.9	20214

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