Plain Talk

By Elwood Kirkpatrick
President

Marketing our Members' Milk to the Greatest Advantage

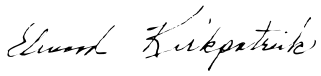
During this summer's record heat wave, MMPA worked very hard for us – its dairy producer member-owners – to ensure we received the best possible price for our milk. With overall milk production in the cooperative dropping up to 15 percent for several days, MMPA filled fluid demand first, making sure we received the best price for our milk.

For five consecutive days in August, our overall production dropped by at least 1 million pounds, and was down over 1.4 million pounds at the height of the heat wave. Fluid bottling demands and milk shipments south were filled first, then contract raw milk sales, like those to Leprino and other customers were filled.

MMPA's balancing plants in Ovid and Constantine took the hardest hit from the milk production deficit but they also played a crucial role in enabling the cooperative to fulfill fluid market demands. Milk was diverted from those plants to fill our fluid and raw customers needs without interruption. We were able to do that because we own the balancing plants.

Several MMPA departments, as well as the milk haulers and you, the producers, helped everything run smoothly while we dealt with the milk deficit.

Our plants were able to receive enough milk to fill our cream and condensed contracts, but MMPA's Manufactured Sales Department suspended sales of spot cream and condensed product until production returned to a more normal level. During that week, the MMPA Ovid and Constantine plants were planning to make butter and powder, but held off doing so to ensure our cream and condensed customers were taken care of. Fortunately, MMPA staff prepares for unexpected events and makes sure we have enough butter and powder in storage so that customers needs could be met without a break in service.

Several MMPA departments, as well as the milk haulers and you, the producers, helped everything run smoothly while we dealt with the milk deficit. MMPA's dispatch team worked long hours to reschedule and redirect shipments, ensuring the fluid market and our contracts were fulfilled. The haulers waited or returned back to farms where the milk had not yet gotten cool enough to haul. You, the producers kept your cooling equipment working to its best ability and kept your cows as comfortable as was possible in the hot conditions. Our efforts paid off with only a few loads of milk being rejected at fluid plants for elevated temperatures.

It is great to see that when faced with a challenge, this cooperative is able to kick into high gear and get the job done. No matter what the situation, MMPA makes every effort to market our member's milk to the greatest advantage. That's the way it was when this cooperative was formed in 1916, and 90 years later, that principle still holds true.