A Feature for Every Friday—

Among The Farmers

Federation Of Agriculture News

Directors Meet

Directors of the Dairymen's Association met last Friday afternoon to discuss especially, problems of advertising and marketing of this year's dairy production.

The importance of assisting in the National Dairy Advertising program was stressed and supported by all. The policy of setting aside one cent per pound butterfat during the month of June has been accepted in other provinces but our policy has been to contribute a grant from the Dairymen's Association. This has amounted to not quite half our share during the past two years and because of the importance of advertising dairy products today, the directors felt the policy of supporting the National Publicity program must be changed.

Federation directors also met Friday evening to hear a report from the Marketing Board case and discuss the Federation program for the summer.

The present program is centered around an investigation into new trends of processing various farm products and the re-organization of several producer-owned dairy plants in Prince County. A survey is also being made into the economics and possibilities of grass drying.

Silo Plans

Farmers who have not obtained a copy of the recent report on grass silos in this Province can get many valuable ideas from an article in this week's Family Herald entitled "Concrete Trench Silos."

Marketing Results

Also in the Family Herald of May 22 is an editorial which touches on the accomplishments of the B.C. Tree Fruits Marketing Board. Results in the form of stable returns to producers, in quality products and expanding markets are what count. The B.C. apple growers too, certainly had their problems and legal battles before getting this Marketing Board into operation. Have a look at this article entitled "Statistics In The Orchard".

Beef Prices

At the moment Maritime beef prices are again in line. The Federal floor price program has been put into operation in major Canadian markets although it is our understanding that to date no sales have been made by packers in the Maritimes to the Federal Government Agency.

Actually, our Maritime deficiency position in beef should enable this price program to be effective here without making any purchases. Be that as it may, there is ample evidence to suggest that packers naturally don't like floor prices; they have found their best avenue for making money in shoving down prices and filling up coolers when the opportunity presents itself. What tomorrow will bring, no one knows, but at the moment our Maritime cattle prices are well in line wih outside markets. They can stay that way if the majority of producers co-operate with their own organizations. Hog and beef producers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have found that such co-operation pays.

Cheese Outlook

Recent contacts with the cheese market in Quebec and Ontario indicate that there is a definite swing away from the production of cheese in those provinces this year.

The recent agreement worked out between the Dominion Government and the Ontario Cheese Marketing Board will undoubtedly stabilize markets to some extent. This should help our Maritime markets. And because Ontario producers will have financial backing to store their cheese and regulate its distribution, this arrangement should indirectly assist the cheese industry in this Province.

This policy is also another illustration of the desire of Federal authorities to work with producer marketing organizations rather then establish floor prices and assume direct government control.

Trips and Meetings

It is often suggested that National meetings and trips to Canada to get information and discuss problems with representatives from other provinces are fruitless and unnecessary. In reality, however, that is not the case, also in actual practice such trips and meetings provide little time for relaxation.

Often the information received and decisions reached cannot be put into practice immediately but being part of a vast country going through an age of rapid developments we must keep in touch with the other provinces and with national authorities.

Our secretary, Mr. Dewar, is presently in Ottawa attending a meeting on Vocational education and obtaining further information on the questions of rail grading of beef, livestock killing plant, etc.

In this day and age, progress in such public ventures cannot be made without facts, advance planning, and discussion with others working in the same field.

Denmark Beats Foot-Mouth Disease

(From May issue of I.F.A.P. News): Recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in Denmark have practically been beaten.

Due to different circumstances, the production of vaccine was insufficient when the epizootic started in the autumn of 1951, the Danish Agricultural Council says. Strong efforts were made to catch up and the vaccine production now is sufficient for elaborate precautions which are being taken to stop the disease from spreading. Most cases have been the A-type but, also, the C-type has appeared. No herds have been killed off.

About 12 per cent of all herds in Denmark suffered from the disease, compared with 55 per cent during the last outbreak in 1938-39.

One Million Tractors Made in 1951

One million tractors were made in the world in 1951.

This estimate is given in a United Nations study, "The European Tractor Industry in the Setting of the World Market." More than half the number of tractors manufactured last year were produced in the United States.

The study says North America has more than two-thirds of the world tractor fleet, while it has only 18 per cent of the world's arable land. Latin America, Asia and Africa own less than five per cent of the tractors in the world, but account for nearly half of the world's arable land. Europe has about 25 per cent of the world tractor fleet, and 32 per cent of the world's arable land.

The United Kingdom has more tractors per acre than any other country in the world. It has one tractor for every 23 hectares of arable land. Switzerland, New Zealand, United States, the Netherlands, Sweden and Western Germany follow in that order. Russia has one tractor per 400 hectares of arable land and in the Far East there is only one tractor for every 13000 hectares. There are 2.5 acres in one hectare.

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Premier Jones With "Abegweit Plush"

Among 1,000 cattlemen attending the National Holstein sale, Premier J. Walter Jones of Prince Edward Island sold a four-year-old cow, Abegweit Plush, seen above, for $1,025. A bull calf, Abegweit Limelight went on the auction block for $1,500. The sale drew animals from Holstein herds across the country.

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox and Mink Farming

At the Seattle, Wash. Fur Exchange sale last week a collection of 17,000 choice muskrat was 95 per cent sold. There was no price change. Average collections brought $1.10 to $1.40. Of 24,000 ranch mink offered 38 per cent was sold. Top bundle of dark mink brought $31. Prices were unchanged as fine males sold from $20 to $31, females, $10. to $15; Ordinary males $15. to $18, females, ordinary, $7. to $9. A fine group of Sapphires (700) was 80 per cent sold, males bringing $40 to $75, females, $25 to $44; 8200 pastels were 40 per cent sold, males going from $25 to $42, females, $15 to $20; Silverblus brought $18 to $27 for males and $12 to $16 for females.

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Soft-tex, a process for new and old fur garments developed by General Fur Cleaners, Inc., has met with over-whelming success. When applied it adds lustre and enables the fur to retain its natural beauty much longer. It is applicable to all furs with the exception of Persian lamb and broadtail. The manufacturers claim that it lasts on a garment for at least one season. The response has been so great that the manufacturers cannot keep up with the demand.

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There is a big row going on in New York among the manufacturing furriers because of the practise of farming out work to small shops. This contract is illegal in union shops but smaller firms are using it and cutting prices. This in our opinion is a natural outcome as a great many of the manufacturing furriers have been asking prices that were were too high to promote the sale of the garments that were manufactured. The new trend may be all to the good for the raw fur business.

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The International Fur and Leather Workers' Union of the United States is putting on a bold program asking for federal aid for the fur industry to enable marginal producers to stay in business. They claim that due to fur taxes, high cost of living and other factors the fur business is in a bad state and that it will be necessary for the government to lend aid to enable producers, manufacturers and retailers to make sufficient profits to keep the industry stable.

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United Mink Breeders Association are offering the last of their standard dark mink at auction in New York. May 20th. They call them 50,000 of the best dark mink in the world.". Each bears the UMB tag which they claim is a guarantee of the finest dark mink in the world.

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Ranch mink was 78 per cent sold at the Edmonton, Alta. auction last week. Dark and extra dark males brought from $18 to $21 and females $10 to $11.50. Other mink prices were, ordinary quality males, $15 to $17; females, $8.50 to $9.50; ones and twos males, $11. to $14, females, $6. to $7.50; heavy type muskrat large and extra large, brought from $1.48 to $1.66; medium and small 80 cents to 92 cents.

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The Hudson's Bay Company held a two day raw fur auction on Thursday and Friday, May 22nd and 23rd of beaver, otter, muskrat, white fox, ermine, wild mink and 11,500 mutation mink. No details of the sale will be available until next week.

Lampson, Fraser & Huth had a very successful auction last week, the offering being for the Mutation Mink Breeders' Association. Prices were strong with females outstanding. A number of merchants who came to the sale expecting little competition and lower prices were surprised by the sustained and widespread interest. Section one of Sapphires was 100 per cent sold with a top of $82 for males, $42 for females. 6,000 Aleutians were 84 per cent sold with a top of $57 and a low of $31; Whites were 73 per cent sold with a top of $78 and a low of $37. Breath of Spring pastels were 81 per cent sold with a top of $51 and a low of $19; Stewart pastels were 89 per cent sold with a top of $56 and $25 for light and pale.

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Department and specialty store figures indicate that these stores carried a slightly higher priced line of Silverblu capes in 1951 than did fur stores. For the most part, however, the same pattern of prices holds for both store groups. A slightly lower price is forecast for the coming season with the fur-stores apparently withdrawing from the $1,850 and over bracket.

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A definite downward shift in the best retail price of pastel mink capes is predicted for 1952. Only 16 per cent of all fur retailers indicated that their best average price for this fur was $1,250 in 1951; 35 per cent estimated that this will be their best average price in 1952, while 10 per cent estimate their best average 1952 level at $2,250 and over.

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Fox and mink ranchers will please bear in mind the annual meeting of the Prince Edward Island Fur Breeders' Association, which will be held in the Vocational School, Charlottetown, at 2.00 p. m. Tuesday, May 27th. Every fox and mink farmer who can possibly spare the time should be present as matters of importance to the industry will be talked over and arrangements will be made for holding the annual fox and mink exhibitions this fall. While the fur industry—at least the fox part of it—is going through a very difficult period, yet we must remember that it is one of the oldest industries in the world and has survived all kinds of disasters. During our own tenure of life we have seen many ups and downs and we believe that the silver fox industry, now so badly hit, will eventually stage a comeback. It may take a year or two more but a fur that has been so long held as beautiful cannot slip out of sight altogether.

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-NEWSY NOTES-

By J. A. Clark, D.Sc.

Soil Structure

Last May we discussed tilth and tillage and mentioned that the physical structure of a soil is often the most important factor in the determination of suitable soil conditions for the growth of crops. The structure of a soil depends upon the arrangement of the separate soil particles.

We speak of soils being loose or compact in structure; thus clay in a fine friable condition would have a loose structure, but if the individual particles are gathered in groups or clumps, the structure would be described as crumby or grandular. Should this same soil be stirred up in a wet condition it would become very dense and such a soil would be called puddled or have a compact structure.

Structure of P. E. Island Soils

Mr. G. B. Whiteside in his "Soil Survey of Prince Edward Island", classes the great majority of "Island" surface soils as fine sandy loams. He states: "Soil structure is only feebly developed, tends to be crumblike in the surface soil and nut or small blocky-like in the subsoil." Referring to the six medium textured soil series, which occupy 85.4 per cent of the "Island" soils he comments: "Because of the lack of cohesion the soils of the above mentioned well-drained series, especially where situated on the strongly undulating to strongly rolling topography, are susceptible to damage by water erosion. Particular attention to sound management and tillage practices is essential for the conservation of the soil and management of fertility.

The series of three heavier textured soils or 9 per cent of the soils of the province are classified as clay loam. The Queen's series, which are small areas near Crown Point and Orwell Point, has a structure described as follows: "The thickness of the surface layer is from 4 to 8 inches, under good management it is mellow and has a crumb structure, particularly in well established grassland. The structure, however, is easily destroyed by improper management, the soil loses its desired tilth, tends to become hard and cracked in dry seasons. Destruction of the structure leaves the soil susceptible to puddling when wet which often leaves it 'dead' and hard to work."

Regarding the O'Leary series he states: "The cultivated surface soil is usually soft and mellow with a tendency to a small crumb structure, however, it may often be small cloddy. The structure is easily destroyed and when dry the surface frequently becomes crusted and may form shrinkage cracks." He describes the Egmont series as follows: "Where cleared the surface soils are dark brown, dark grey or black in colour, having a higher organic-matter content generally than the O'Leary soils. The surface layer is also slightly deeper and when under good grass cover tends to have a moderately good crumb structure. Quite often the subsurface or leached layer is thicker than in the better drained soils. It may be laminated and usually cohesive to sticky and puddled when wet."

Means of Improving Structure

There have been a number of factors that have influenced granulation or improved structure in our soils, some of these are: adequate drainage; doing tillage operations only when there is no free water present, but just the capillary (film) water in the soil; the maintenance of humus in the soil; the use of lime; the penetration of plant roots, earthworm and burrowings of other animal life, these all improve soil structure.

Without adequate drainage it is impossible to secure a good structural soil condition in the three heavy textural soils referred to by Mr. G. B. Whiteside as the Queen's, O'Leary and Egmont series. Such soils are naturally inclined to puddle and become compact. When dry they work up and form many rough lumpy clods. Either adequate surface or tile drainage, which removes excess water, will loosen the soil and improve the circulation of water and air produced by a "slacking" of the soil. This greatly assists in producing the granular structure desired.

Tillage operations, when they coincide wtih that moist soil condition sometimes referred to as friable, (that is when there is only capillary water present, and when the soil does not show any free water when compressed), will greatly help the soil to become crumby or granulated.

The structure of the soil on our dairy farms well illustrates the advantage of humus in developing good tilth. Decayed organic matter, known as humus, is a dark coloured, gelatinous substance that helps to produce a granular structure in the soil. We all know that the maintenance of humus means improved tilth of the land and larger crops.

The use of lime on our acid soils has very beneficial results. This is particularly true of our heavier soils. It gathers the fine particles together in groups, spoken of as flocculation, and when the soil dries, these become granules. Heavy soils that are rich in carbonate of lime are sometimes so mellow that they have been mistaken for sandy soils.

When soils are frozen, long needle-like crystals cut through the soil in every direction. The network of crystals have cleaving action that is so powerful that the hardest clods fall to pieces after two or more periods of thawing and freezing. When a field has been improperly worked, and the surface has become cloddy, frost is the most effective agent in restoring fertility.

The penetration of plant roots, which are innumerable in grass lands, the burrowing of ants and earthworms and other forms of animal life, are all important soil improvement agencies. Under favourable conditions, earthworms work and transport to the surface many tons of soil per acre each year. The structure of soil is greatly improved when left in grass for a few years.

Krilium

A research laboratory product, known as CRD-189, a synthetic soil conditioner, has been given the name of Krilium. In many tests, under different soil and climatic conditions on this continent, this chemical has greatly improved the physical condition of many types of soil. It is said to glue clay soils into porous lumps (like worm casts), from the size of tiny seeds to clumps as big as buck shot, and that these hold together when flooded with water. Remarkable results have also been obtained on alkali soils of very poor structure.

We are told that Krilium is of the type of chemicals used to produce synthetic fibres for the manufacture of clothing; that its molecules form long chains that attach themselves to the fine colloidal clay particles, binding them together into stable clumps. The holes through these clumps permit water and air not only to move readily through these spaces, but also allow plant roots to penetrate to the microscopic clay particles.

Krilium is not a plant food, it is resistant to the action of soil bacteria, which evidently prolong its soil binding properties, and add to its value in preventing soil erosion. The Monsanto Chemical Company, who originated Krilium, have restricted this year's output to research workers. The approximate cost is $2.00 per pound, and the results mentioned above were obtained from the use of about 1,000 pounds per acre. Its cost, at present, for ordinary farm practice, is prohibitive. Increased demand may lower the cost substantially.

Italian scientists claim to have a similar substance, called "Flotal" which is already on the market.

The older coal beds of the Atlantic Provinces are all bituminous, while other Canadian coalfields range up to semi-anthricite types.

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U.S. Cattle Buyers Flock To Canada For National Holstein Sale

Despite the fact that the U.S. has clamped an embargo on Canadian cattle being shipped south of the border because of second outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the west, American dairy cattle buyers flocked to Oakville, Ont., for the first big national cattle sale to be held in the province since the embargo went on last February. An estimated $12,000 was laid down on bulls and heifers, some of which will be kept and cared for in Canada by the men who sold them until restrictions are lifted. Sixty-eight animals, representing the best in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes were sold for $54,337 to make what dairymen termed a satisfactory average of $905 per animal.

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