

programs" have failed to move milk products out of storage at any appreciable rate.

Faced with this situation, Secretary Benson and the CCC officials decided to lower the support price for dairy products on April 1 of this year. Price support for the dairy industry is required by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1949. However, this act requires that dairy products be supported at a level from 75 to 90% of parity as is necessary to assure an adequate supply of milk. Economists of the USDA were of the opinion that the nation had an adequate supply of milk, Benson lowered parity support from 90 to 75%.

Housewives Buying More Butter

Despite this reduction in government support, dairy surpluses are continuing to pile up. However, the USDA says that home sales of butter are about 10% higher than they were immediately before supports and consumer prices on butter were lowered.

If a 10% increase in consumption of all dairy products could be realized this year, the industry and the USDA would be encouraged. In 1945 per capita consumption of milk was about 400 pounds. Since then annual consumption has steadily declined and is now about 350 pounds.

If the dairy industry could entice the American people to drink a quarter of a glass of milk more each day, the equivalent of present surplus stocks would be used up in about 18 months. The extra drink of milk, however, does not seem to be getting across. Some progress at promoting increased consumption of dairy products has been reported by the industry. However, this increase, even if it should remain steady, is being offset by increased production.

Meanwhile, the industry and Benson are involved in a farm program which he believes is not realistic. The CCC has about \$5 billion tied up in supporting prices on wheat, corn, cotton, and dairy products. Dairy supports have been lowered and the Eisenhower Administration wants to lower supports generally. However, the Administration is faced with Congressional efforts to increase supports. Benson says that if supports were raised to 80% of parity the Government would probably be forced to buy another 100 to 150 million pounds of butter, and consumption would drop about 50 million pounds due to increased prices.

As the price support campaign comes up before Congress, Benson, the Department of Agriculture, and the industry are all participating in a cooperative promotion campaign to increase domestic milk consumption. No one seems willing to make any predictions or issue any challenges this year.



Leaders of the AFRA conference broadcast their opinions and ideas through local radio stations. Left to right: C. M. Ferguson, USDA Extension Service, T. S. Sutton, Ohio State University, and George Scarseth and Harry Cook, AFRA

Agricultural Progress Slowed By Mental Brakes?

COLUMBUS, OHIO—The progress we enjoy has come because something better was discovered to take the place of what was in current use, according to George D. Scarseth, director of research of the American Farm Research Association. We already have enough facts to provide a richer life in wide spread areas of the world, but the brakes holding us back are largely in our mental attitudes. One of the Scarseth's examples from recent times: In the opinion of agronomists who looked at basic facts about 7 years ago, corn could be grown continuously, with new practices, as a soil-building crop without legumes in the rotation. The first reaction to this was to declare it heresy, yet today leading agronomists are writing success stories about this change in point of view. No new research really was done and most of the facts were known. The big difference came through a change in attitude and the result is a great deal of progress in corn growing practices.

This is a part of the revolution in professional agriculture in America which, in the view of C. M. Ferguson, USDA extension service director, has used science and education to produce a professional agriculture as contrasted with a peasant agriculture. He holds the opinion that the farmers of tomorrow will have to be better managers and better mechanics than ever. While more adequate methods of putting research results to use are needed, according to Ferguson, we are woefully lacking in marketing and distribution research and its application. His organization is putting increased emphasis on marketing and distribution

research and creating better understanding among farm people of public affairs issues.

AFRA's sparkplug, Scarseth, told his group during its 1954 research conference that the attempt to solve farm surpluses with votes for help from the national treasury rather than to buckle down into the hard but more noble course of facing some facts that are indeed known, is a risky path involving the future freedom and well-being of agriculture.

"It is not the technology of our times and the days ahead we need to fear as much as the stones in our brains and hearts that won't let us face up to new issues," contended Scarseth, who found support in C. F. Kettering, former General Motors research head, who described the present price support program as a method of "buying votes with public money," instead of meeting face to face the problem of selling farm products.

According to C. H. Becker, AFRA president and general manager of the Illinois Farm Supply Co., AFRA's objectives are:

1. To reduce the gap between research and action for the farmer.
2. To accumulate facts for co-op leaders and employees.
3. To promote new research investigations.
4. To broaden understanding of scientific discoveries through educational help for the farmer.
5. To help farm co-ops to keep abreast of modern technology.
6. To assist agricultural experiment stations and colleges in their programs.