

Emails Received Concerning the Petition from Western United Dairymen

12/4/2011

This email is directed to both dairy branches. I am a mid sized producer here in the central valley that is under tremendous financial strain. Month after month I follow the 131 and 124 Federal Order prices and for the life of me can not understand how the department could allow such a variance in price that I receive vs what fellow dairymen are receiving north and west of our borders. Do we as CA. dairymen need to find a way to rid ourselves of this state order and adopt a new FO or will the department do what is fair and just and restructure the 4b formula to incorporate a whey value that will pay us a fair price for the milk we provide to Ca cheese processors? I like other producers would also like to be able to use the CME to hedge my milk production for insurance but CME class 3 and CA 4b are so far apart that it makes hedging unaffordable and unrealistic. I urge the Department to grant a hearing based on WUD's petition.

Sincerely, Donald Vanderpoel

12/5/2011

Dear CDFA Secretary Karen Ross,

My family and I are third generation dairy farmers here in southern California. Over the past several years, we have faced economic hurdles in this industry that even my grandfather never faced in the early days of dairy farming 60 years ago. Low milk prices, and high feed costs are just part of the problem. We are now faced with more regulation, regulatory fees, and inspections than ever before, which require more bookkeeping and more accounting. All of these have effectively crippled our equity in our own family's life-business. Now more than ever, I question the future sustainability of the family dairy farm as we know it.

I have always held our California milk pooling system in high regard, and have always been proud of our system of milk pooling in California. But, many of my fellow producers and I feel like CDFA has failed to address and correct basic pricing issues within the California milk pricing formula. One of these failures is the issue of dry whey compensation to producers. When compared to producers in the Federal Order system, we find ourselves significantly underpaid for dry whey, while having some of the highest operating costs in the country.

Since the office of the Secretary has the power, and responsibility to maintain fairness between the producers and the processors, I would urge you to please act quickly, and call a much needed hearing to correct the large difference between the Federal Order and the California pricing formulas. California's dairy families need to be profitable in order to survive the current climate of this industry, which has been rather stormy the last several years. We don't believe its fair for processors to announce record profits from our products, while dairymen are "dying on the vine".

Thankyou for your consideration,

Edward Haringa
Green Acres Dairy

12/6/2011

I am a dairy producer in Fresno county and have been in business for 12 years with my wife and two sons . With a lot of hard work we have been able to grow our business over the past years but since the financial wreck in 2009 with the dairy industry we have been struggling to survive. California used to be a least cost producer of milk but for the last 5 years that is no longer true our costs have soared . We need to bring our pricing in the state or California more in line with our neighboring Federal orders. If CDFA fells to get this done our state will see a mass exodus of dairies going out of business or relocating to other regions. I urge CDFA to grant this hearing for the good of all our Dairy families .

Sincerely JIm Wilson

12/6/2011

To whom it may concern;

As a producer of milk in central and southern California and also a processor of milk in southern California I would like to urge you to accept our petition for a hearing on the California Class 4b milk pricing issue.

When our 4b price is compared to the Federal Order Class III price we are at a serious disatvantage. The F.O. pricing system accounts for the whey in their Class III pricing and California only partially does so.

As you know, we have to compete with all the other suppliers of milk in not only the US, but also with imported products. If we are not able to get what others get for their milk, we are less able to survive economically tough times.

As you know, this has been going on for quite awhile now and the dairy producers in California are not in good financial condition. We have not yet financially recovered from the low prices we received in 2009. The rest of the country however has done really well, and are now relatively OK. If we would have been paid the whey portion on our milk like the rest of the country has, we also would also be OK. As it is now, we are again heading into a period of lower prices and are not in a position to compete with suppliers in the Federal Order.

I strongly urge you to even the playing field and not force many dairy families to lose their livelihood just because our cheese plants want cheaper raw product coming into their plants in California than what they are able to get in other States.

Sincerely, Arie de Jong,
Hollandia Dairy , San Marcos
Milky Way Dairy, Visalia

12/7/2011

Dear Secretary Karen Ross,
As a dairyman working very hard in these difficult times, My family and I would like for you to consider granting the proposed Class 4b hearing. We are in challenging times, so granting this hearing would be of great importance to the dairymen of this this state.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike De Jager
De Jager Dairy

12/7/2011

Karen Ross
Secretary
CDFA

I represent P & D Dairy in Chino, CA and Poso Creek Family Dairy in Wasco, CA. With the substantial differences that exist between the California Class 4b and the Federal Order Class III prices, we strongly urge that you grant the request for a Class 4b hearing to address the pricing discrepancies.

Sincerely,

Steve Lindersmith
P & D Dairy
Poso Creek Family Dairy, LLC

12/7/2011

Dear Secretary Karen Ross

I am urging you to grant the request for a Class 4b hearing. Considering the huge disparity between the California Class 4b and the Federal Order Class III prices,

Please help us dairy farmers. It has truly been difficult for us.

Best Always,
Barbara Martin
www.dairygoddess.wordpress.com
Dairy Goddess Farmstead Cheese
Tony Martin Dairy

12/7/2011

Dear Secretary Karen Ross,

Please grant the CA Dairy Producers request for a Class 4b hearing. We desperately need more dollars in our milk checks. California dairy producers milk checks are lower than the other states. Producers are barely covering their cost now and many producers are facing bankruptcy.

Please help us. It seems that whenever the producers ask for a raise we are denied and when processors ask, their requests are granted.

Please help us.

Thank you,
Mertens Dairy
Marilyn Mertens

12/9/2011

I am requesting the Dept. to grant the hearing as requested by WUD. It is imperative to hear the testimony so a fair decision can be reached. My son Mark is looking to move his 4500 cow operation to Colorado, in part because of the disadvantages in California for the beleaguered producer side of the industry. This is again a chance for the dept. to weigh facts. Syp Vander Dussen. Sent via BlackBerry - a service from AT&T Wireless.

12/9/2011

Dear Secretary Ross:

My name is Mark Stiefel and I own and operate a 1200 cow dairy in Riverside County. I am writing this as a request that you grant the hearing requested by Western United Dairywomen regarding the discrepancies to California's 4B price in relationship to Federal Orders. My dairy is only one of a large number that are experiencing a dead-end road to our profession if we cannot have a level playing field amongst our out-of-state producers. This request comes under the knowledge that you are facing extreme pressure from other factions of our industry NOT to grant this hearing.

I urge you to give the matter your fullest and fairest consideration. Many thanks for your time.

Respectfully,
Mark H. Stiefel

12/10/2011

Dear Secretary Karen Ross,

As a producer in Central California, I believe our California Class 4b pricing system is out of line compared to the Federal Milk Marketing Order. There is no reason why our whey should be priced differently from the Federal Milk Marketing Order Whey Factor. California dairy families are at an extreme disadvantage compared to other states, and our product is being sold to cheese plants at an unfair value compared to other states in the U.S.

This pricing adjustment is make or break for struggling California dairy families that have worked so hard to keep their business afloat. I strongly urge that we have a hearing with CDFA to immediately close this unfair whey pricing gap.

Sincerely,

Luke Vanderham
L & J Vanderham Dairy

12/11/2011

Dear CDFA Secretary Karen Ross

My family and I have been in the dairy business for 27 yrs in Riverdale, CA, and over the past 3 yrs we have watched all of our hard work and equity disappear. While in those 3 yrs we have watched all of our California processors post record profits on the backs of our states dairy families. Our family recently had to file for chapter 11 bankruptcy along with 31 other dairy families that I know of, and currently there are approximately over 50 dairy facilities for sale in our state right now with no buyers. This alone should be overwhelming evidence that we no longer have a viable dairy industry in our state because of our flawed pricing system. Our state has become one of the most expensive states to produce milk in, so our 4b pricing needs to be brought more inline with the class III price. So in saying this I beg CDFA to act on this petition to fix our states huge disadvantage on our milk pricing. The dairy industry is heading into another downturn and California dairymen can not afford to be at a disadvantage any longer. Let me remind you these same processors are paying upwards of two dollar premiums for milk in other parts of the country to keep their plants full and our still profitable all we are asking is for the full value of whey in our pricing.

Riverdale Dairyman

12/11/2011

To Whom It May Concern,

Please grant a hearing request regarding a proposal to modify the Class 4 B formula.

I feel we, as dairymen, are being severely hurt, financially, by the large disparity between California and F M M O prices for milk sold to cheese plants.

Thank You for your consideration.

Al Scheenstra,

Scheenstra Dairy

12/12/2011

Dear Secretary Ross

My family has been in the dairy business for 20 years and it is in my mind a family business which includes my brothers, mother and father and now my children. I have seen over the past 3 years hardworking dairy families bankrupted due in part to the discrepancy of our milk price in CA compared to dairies in other states. The department sees the reason for keeping the whey formula at its current level as a supply and demand issue, I on the other hand think that dairymen need to be paid based on milk value. The reason processors in Ca. are not building new cheese plants in Ca. is due to regulation and the simple fact that Ca. has capped its milk production ability simply because the cost of producing milk in CA is higher than any other state. I am asking the department to grant a hearing to rectify the price discrepancy in the 4b formula in order to keep us competitive with the rest of the country.

Sincerley,
Jack Mendonsa Delano Ca.

12/13/2011

Karen Ross
CFDA Secretary

For the survival of our dairy and many others and also to secure that the processors have adequate milk in the future, California pricing needs to match the Federal Milk Marketing Order.

If CDFA is unable to attain this then maybe an alternative would be for the dairies to join the Federal Milk Marketing Order.

Respectfully,

Harvey Boschma
Boschma & Sons Dairy
Wasco, CA

12/14/2011

Dear Secretary Ross

My name is Richard Van Leeuwen , we have a dairy farm in imperial county ca. I am requesting the dept. to grant the hearing as requested by WUD.

When we moved our dairy from Corona ca. to imperial valley ca., we looked in other places also and we decided to stay in ca. because of our families long history with the state .The last few years it has been like a punishment to be here ..AZ. dairymen just 1 hour from my location are doing better because of the federal order pays for the full value of their milk . it looks like we should of built there. our recovery from 2009 has been very little and looks grim with the forecast of 2012 prices .

We need our 4b price to be equal to class III pricing if we are to survive..either put us on a level playing field or let us join the Federal Market Order..

Sincerely, Richard Van Leeuwen

Bullfrog Farms
Imperial , ca.