

Editorial

Doing Our Part

Sometimes when a problem seems as if it is too large, or too global to solve, we often do nothing because we don't know what to do. I am thinking of issues such as poverty, homelessness, changes in social norms, and others. What we fail to realize is that we can create small but meaningful change by acting locally and that these small changes, when multiplied by others in neighboring counties or towns, can make large changes of a more global nature.

To be more specific, we live in an era of being reminded daily of worldwide trade and export, that we live in a global economy, and that solutions to part of the dairy industry crisis may, indeed, depend on global markets. We tend to forget that **each of us can contribute to the solutions by acting locally if only in a small way.**

Pennsylvania is bordered by six other states, nearly all providing competition for our milk and milk products. The Board often hears stories from those living along or close to those borders about neighbors, friends and family that cross state lines to purchase milk at a lower price than what is available in Pennsylvania. This is the challenge. We recognize it, we understand it, and one solution we have is to promote the importance of our dairy industry – economically and culturally – to what makes us a great place to live and how each consumer can help. Helping may mean paying a little more for milk by shopping in-state, at least at this time. We can't regulate to keep out-of-state milk from coming into Pennsylvania, nor can we tell retailers what brand of milk to buy.

All consumers in Pennsylvania, including those of us not living close to a border, can help by making sure we purchase milk that is from Pennsylvania farms, or at a minimum, is processed in Pennsylvania. There are two things to do at the store:

1. Look for the PA Preferred logo. It may be on the bottle cap or somewhere on the bottle, itself. The PA Preferred logo on milk tells you that the milk is 100% sourced in Pennsylvania.
2. If you can't find the PA Preferred logo on products in your dairy case, look for **the 42 plant code**. Milk with the 42 at the beginning of the plant code means that the milk has been processed at a Pennsylvania plant and sourced mainly from Pennsylvania farms.



A sample PA plant code is

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PLT 42-248

There is also an online site where you can search to find the plant where your milk was processed. Try it! Plug in the plant code above to see what PA Dairy it is.

<http://whereismymilkfrom.com/finding-my-code>

If your local retail outlet is not selling PA processed or PA Preferred milk, talk with the manager to see if you can find out the reason and to request a change.

And, don't assume that because the address of the manufacturer is out-of-state that the milk is not PA milk – check the plant code! We recently were made aware that this is an issue at one of our listening sessions when an attendee commented that milk in her retail outlet is from Texas. Yes, that processor has headquarters in Texas, but the milk was bottled in PA and came from Pennsylvania cows!

We all have a role to play in helping boost the dairy industry right now. Buying Pennsylvania products is a key part in playing that role.

Please call me if you have any questions or comments at 717-421-8244 or email me at chardbarge@pa.gov.

Thanks, and Drink PA Milk!

Carol A. Hardberger