

MAY EDITORIAL

So, What Does the Milk Marketing Board DO?

Carol A. Hardbarger

There is a commercial on television right now for a brand of dishwasher soap in which a young girl laments that her mother washes the dishes before she puts them in the dishwasher and then says, “So, what does the dishwasher do?” I can identify. I REALLY can identify. Most of us employed at the Milk Marketing Board are often asked what we do.

The basic functions of the MMB are centered around its legislated duties that include

1. Establishing minimum milk prices in Pennsylvania at the farmer, bottler, and retail levels.
2. Issuing licenses to milk bottlers/dealers, haulers, and others.
3. Management of a security program to ensure farmers are paid.

In addition, MMB certifies weighers and samplers and calibrates bulk milk tanks as a service to the industry.

The Board holds a monthly meeting, usually the first Wednesday of each month, at which it hears general public comment, votes to approve price changes, acts on requests to consider dairy industry regulations or regulation changes, and establishes schedules for hearings of issues the Board has agreed to consider. The monthly meeting is open to the public and schedules are posted on the MMB website at www.mmb.pa.gov.

Throughout the year the Board holds hearings to listen to testimony about issues it has agreed to consider. Hearing schedules are also published online, and they are open to the public.

Anyone with an issue related to the dairy industry can contact the Board to request that the issue be considered. Sometimes these requests are in the form of a petition, but they may be submitted via a written or email letter. Sometimes attorneys are involved, but anyone may approach the Board without an attorney to request that an issue be taken under advisement. If the issue is approved for consideration, interested parties and the general public will be invited to attend and testify.

The Board has a staff of 17; nine people work in the Cameron Street office in Harrisburg and eight people work in the field as auditors and examiners. Auditors generally work with dairy processors while the examiners handle calibration and other field work. The Harrisburg office staff perform primarily accounting functions and interact with processors, cooperatives, and farmers providing general customer service and reports as requested.

Aside from hearing and regulatory voting responsibilities, Board members are actively involved in attending agriculture group meetings across the state, interacting with state legislators, and serving as advocates for PA’s dairy industry.

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Please let us know if you have any questions about what we do, or if you have an issue you would like the Board to consider. We are ready to listen!