

PA Milk Marketing Board  
Carol A. Hardbarger

*The Tin-ites and the Shingle-ites – a Lesson in How NOT to Compromise*

My father, a minister, often told a story about in-church fighting. It seems that a new roof was needed on a church and the congregation could not agree on whether it should be a new tin roof or one using shingles. Rather than debate and compromise, they decided to use tin on half of the roof and shingles on the other half. Those voting for tin sat in the pews directly under the tin; those voting for shingles sat under the shingled part of the roof. Each side was self-satisfied in not giving in and getting its own way.

Members of the Board's four constituency groups—retailers, processors, producers and consumers—sometimes appear at odds during policy discussions or hearings on desired changes to regulations governing milk pricing. We have been involved in several hearings that have lasted for years without resolution.

Rob, Jim and I have committed to providing opportunities for groups to work together to compromise and reach a consensus of what is best for the dairy industry overall. We believe that an industry in crisis requires effective communications and the ability to see a bigger picture. As I stated in a previous article (on the 4-legged stool), the health of all the groups with which we work is a critical piece in working through the current crisis and finding solutions to strengthen the dairy industry for the future. We can't afford a situation in which one group always "sits under the tin roof" and one is always "under the shingles." They sometimes need to reach consensus on "using the best type of roof material to meet the most needs and make a decision that is shared by all."

Is this difficult? You bet it is! Especially when each side is certain its solution to the problem is the best under the circumstances. In reaching a consensus, parties don't just vote and accept the majority decision; they work to find solutions that everyone can actively support—or at least live with. The importance of good communication between cooperatives and their members, independent producers and their processors, and between dairy advocacy groups and consumers can't be overstated.

The Board has many opportunities to provide leadership to the industry by requesting that groups work together, and we take those seriously.

PMMB is always available to answer questions and respond to concerns. I can be reached at 717-210-8244 or by email at [chardbarga@pa.gov](mailto:chardbarga@pa.gov).