THE FOLLOWING TESTIMONY OF ARDEN TEWKSBURY,

MANAGER OF PROGRESSIVE AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

IS PRESENTED TO THE PENNSYLVANIA MILK MARKETING BOARD

REGARDING THE LEVEL OF THE OVER-ORDER PREMIUM ON

MILK USED FOR FLUID PURPOSES IN THE STATE OF

PENNSYLVANIA.

FEBRUARY 28, 2017

**Progressive Agriculture Organization (Like us on FACEBOOK!)**

1300 Rattlesnake Hill Road Meshoppen, PA 18630   Phone 570-833-5776

**progressiveagricultureorg@gmail.com**

February 28, 2017

My name is Arden Tewksbury of Meshoppen, Pennsylvania (Wyoming County).

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify at this important hearing concerning the level of the premium collected on fluid milk that is used for bottling and is marketed in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Chairman, I’m again listing all of my past activities, but I’m not going to read them. I believe it is more important to relate to the serious financial problems that are facing the majority of dairy farmers in Pennsylvania as well as many dairy farmers across the United States.

\*In addition to operating my dairy farm in Meshoppen Township, Wyoming County, Pennsylvania for over 50 years, I have also been involved with many farm organizations. In the 1960s I served on the dairy committee of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, later on I served on the dairy committees of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, and the Pennsylvania State Grange for several years. In the 1970s, I was elected to the Board of Directors of Eastern Milk Producers, which I served for 9 years. While there, I was on the Executive Board for 7 years, 2 years as Vice-President, and 5 years as President of the Co-op. During my term as President, we were successful in bringing Leprino Foods into South Waverly, Pennsylvania, which took care of a substantial amount of milk that many times was homeless. After leaving the Board, I served as assistant to the General Manager, and later on, I did consulting work for Leprino Foods. During the 1980s, I was hired to do membership and dairy work for the Pennsylvania Farmers Union and was named manager of the Northern Tier Farmers Union Co-op. I also became a director of the Regional Marketing Cooperative Agency and also the Regional Bargaining Agency. In 1985, I was named Granger of the Year for the State of Pennsylvania. In 1991, several dairy farmers started the Progressive Agriculture Organization, which I have managed since that time. \*

Mr. Chairman, today in addition to representing the Progressive Agriculture Organization, I’m also representing the Dairy Sub-committee of the National Family Farm Coalition of Washington DC. I serve as Chairman of the Committee. The Coalition has other members in Pennsylvania in addition to Pro-Ag. Members of the Coalition come from at least 20 other states.

Mr. Chairman and other members of the Board as well as the important staff members, I want to reiterate our strong, sincere support of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board. Any attempt to eliminate the over-order premium on milk used for bottling in Pennsylvania must be and will be met with stiff opposition. Also, in addition, any attempt to dismantle any authorities of the Board will be met with sincere opposition.

Mr. Chairman, while prices paid to dairy farmers have recovered approximately $3.00 per cwt. in 2017 over the lower prices of 2015 and 2016; however, these current prices fall way short of the prices that are needed by Pennsylvania dairy farmers. Different cost of production figures seem to indicate that the average cost of producing milk in Pennsylvania is around $23 per cwt. But dairy farmers also need to be able to make a profit!

Also, there appears to be no sincere efforts by the United States Congress to step in and correct many of the inequities that the same Congress has imposed on all dairy farmers across the United States.

Our organizations which I represent strongly support the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board and we recommend the level of the premium remain at the $1.60 per cwt. level. This amount closely resembles the $1.50 per cwt. premium that Readington Farms in White House, New Jersey presently continues to pay their dairy farmers, with a large majority of their dairy farmers residing and producing milk in Pennsylvania. Any lowering of the Board’s premium or dismantling the premium could possibly create unintended consequences for many dairy farmers in Pennsylvania.

While I understand there is no scheduled sunshine meeting today, therefore I must say while we strongly support the current level of the $1.60 per cwt. premium, however, we are very troubled that there appears to be many qualified co-op members that may not be receiving their share of the premium. This cannot continue. All of us must continue to resolve this serious problem.

It is rewarding to note that DFA has rescinded their petition to the Federal Order #1 Market Administrator which was geared to allow DFA to Depool 900 dairy farmers under certain provisions in Federal Order #1. Our deep concern was for all 900 dairy farmers; however it appears that nearly 300 of these dairy farmers were from Pennsylvania. Depooling of these Pennsylvania dairy farmers would have added further unrest in Pennsylvania and could have added more pressure on the $1.60 premium.

The Progressive Agriculture Organization submitted a working solution to the chaotic problem. However, the Market Administrator ruled a hearing would have to be held to honor our request. Why is it that no emergency action can ever be taken to help our dairy farmers?

Again I want to thank the Board for this opportunity to testify here today and I commend you for your concern of our Pennsylvania dairy farmers.

Arden Tewksbury