



Holstein Association USA, Inc. Dairy Price Stabilization Program – Draft

The volatility in dairy product prices and dairy producer milk prices is extremely difficult for dairy producers, milk processors and end users of milk and dairy products to manage. The U.S. All Milk price averaged \$15.13 for 2005, just \$12.88 for 2006, a record high of \$19.13 for 2007 and \$18.32 for 2008, the second highest on record. But, the U.S. All Milk price was a record monthly high of \$21.90 November of 2007, started 2008 with a January price of \$20.50 only to fall to \$15.60 by December and down to \$11.50 for February 2009. Such volatility creates major problems for dairy producers to manage cash flow and make capital investment decisions. When prices are at their lows returns over feed costs become unfavorable and even negative. These unfavorable returns have a negative impact beyond the dairy producer level. Farm input suppliers are negatively impacted as dairy producers reduce their purchases of feed, seed, fertilizer, crop chemicals, machinery and other inputs. These lower input purchases negatively impact local businesses and communities.

Program objectives:

- To prevent severely depressed producer milk prices that result in low and negative returns over feed costs to dairy producers.
- To reduce the volatility of dairy product prices and producer milk prices and thereby reduce the price risk to dairy producers, dairy processors and end users of milk and dairy products.
- Provide flexibility in allowing dairy producers who wish to expand their dairy operations as well as providing for new producers who wish to enter dairying.
- To complement and not replace other existing dairy programs such as the federal dairy price support program and the Milk Income Loss Contract Program. In fact, this program would reduce the federal government cost of both of these two programs.
- Provide for a long run dairy program for seven years with a five year review for continuation and/or modifications based on past performance.

Program provisions:

- The program is mandatory in that all states will be included. However, it is flexible in that individual producers may decide to expand their dairy operation and new producers are allowed to enter the dairy industry. States having programs to grow their dairy industry will still be able to implement such programs.
- Upon implementation of the program, each dairy producer will be assigned an initial base of raw milk marketings from April 1, 2008 through March 30, 2009. There will be a committee set up to review individual appeals. For those producers with less than a 12-month history and for new producers entering after the implementation date, their base will begin with their first full month of milk marketings and for the next 11 months. Each producer's base will be divided into their quarterly historical milk marketings. Bases are a moving base whereby at the beginning of the next 12-month period, a producer's base will be the recent past 12 months.
- The base is assigned to the producer owning the producer license for the dairy operation.
- Bases cannot be sold but can be transferred to someone who takes over the dairy operation on the existing dairy facility.

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- Producers can combine their bases from two or more facilities into one dairy facility provided each producer holding one of the bases to be combined remains engaged in milk production of the operation in the combined facility.
- In all other instances a producer’s base ceases once the owner of the producer license no longer is actively producing and marketing milk.
- The program will be administered by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture with an advisory Board, hereafter referred to as Board, appointed by the Secretary from nominations. The Board will include two dairy producers from each of 6 regions—the West, South, Southeast, Central, Midwest and Northeast; one consumer representative, one representative of dairy product firms (cheese, butter, milk powder or other manufactured products), one representative of a fluid milk bottler, and a dairy economist advisor to the Board.
- The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the Board will forecast the market for fluid milk and manufactured dairy products (total commercial disappearance) that includes both the domestic market and exports for each quarter of the next 12 months. Taking into consideration the current level of milk production, a determination will be made as to the needed change in U.S. milk production to fulfill the market needs for each quarter of the next 12 months allowing for a producer raw milk price that is positive over operating costs as determined by the Board. The Board will meet quarterly with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to revise forecasts and to forecast out by quarter for the next 12 month period. The market needs by quarter is referred to as “allowable milk marketings”.
- Dairy producers who maintain their milk marketings by quarter within the “allowable milk marketings” are not directly impacted by the program. Recognizing that milk production is affected by weather, feed quality, herd health, etc., a producer who exceeds the “allowable milk marketings” for a given quarter by two percent or less will not be impacted provided that their milk marketings for the entire 12 month period are within the “allowable milk marketings” and if so, any “market access fees” collected will be refunded.
- Dairy producers who produce at or below their “allowable milk marketings” will not be impacted with a reduction in base in the future marketing period/s.
- Dairy producers who wish to expand their dairy operation and exceed the “allowable milk marketings” will be assessed a “market access fee” per hundredweight on total milk marketings. This “market access fee” will initially be in the range of \$2.00 to \$3.00 per hundredweight on all milk marketed as determined by the U.S. Secretary and the Board. Based on historical performance of the program, this market access fee may be increased or decreased, but cannot be increased for dairy producers currently being assessed the “market access fee” for the current 12-month marketing period.
- For dairy producers who expand marketings beyond the “allowable milk marketings” and pay a “market access fee”, their fees would be collected and redistributed back to the dairy producers who held their milk marketings within the “allowable milk marketings”. Redistribution of “market access fees” will be done annually at the anniversary date of the inception of this program.
- Once it is determined that a dairy producer has expanded milk marketings beyond the “allowable milk marketings” for a given quarter, the dairy producer will have the “market access fee” deducted from their milk check in the following quarter and for the next three quarters. The dairy producer’s higher milk marketings during the first quarter and following three quarters having a “market access fee” becomes the new and higher historical base to which milk marketings for the quarters for the next 12 months will be compared to. New

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dairy producers are those who are not the transferee of an existing dairy producer's base, but rather entering dairying as an entirely new dairy operation. New dairy producers will have the "market access fee" deducted for the first four quarters of their milk marketings. Thereafter, the milk marketings during these four quarters become the new dairy producer's base to compare the next 12 months' milk marketings to.

- As with Milk Income Loss Contract payments dairy producers will file with their area USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office their history of milk production and monthly milk marketings to establish a milk base. Dairy producers will authorize their milk plant or dairy cooperative to submit their milk marketings directly to the FSA office. If a dairy producer's milk marketings exceed the "allowable milk marketings" for a given quarter, the FSA office will notify the dairy producer's milk plant or dairy cooperative to deduct the "market access fee" starting the following quarter and for the next three quarters and submit the fees to the FSA office. Area FSA offices will submit "market access fees" collected to the national FSA office where they will be pooled and a value per hundredweight will be calculated for distribution to all dairy producers who had not exceeded the "allowable milk marketings".
- Transfers of bases from one dairy producer to another or the combination of bases must be approved by the area FSA office.
- The Federal Milk Market Administrator or State Market Administrator, will, if solicited, provide information to use to verify reported producer milk marketings from dairy plants.

Administrative costs:

An assessment of no more than two cents per hundredweight will be assessed against all milk marketings to cover administrative costs of the program. Milk plants are to submit these assessments directly to the national FSA office.

For more information, please contact:

Gordie Cook, Director and Chair, Legislative Affairs Committee
Holstein Association USA, Inc. – 413.447.1461

Adam Griffin, Dairy Identification Programs Manager
Holstein Association USA, Inc. – 802.451.4277

Doug Maddox, President
Holstein Association USA, Inc. – 559.867.4457

John M. Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Holstein Association USA, Inc. – 802.451.4220