

Testimony

**Regarding Proposals to Amend
Class III and IV Price Formulas in all Federal
Milk Marketing Orders**

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**By Donna Hall
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Hearing Convening on January 24, 2006
Alexandria, Virginia**

Held By: USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service/Dairy Division

Testimony Presented at USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Hearing
Concerning Class III and IV Make Allowances
By Donna Hall, 566 Halls Way, Muncy, PA 17756
Alexandria, Virginia
January 25, 2006

Your honor, thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. My name is Donna Hall. Our family operates a dairy farm business in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. I am speaking today as a dairy farmer, and as a member of Progressive Agriculture Organization (Pro Ag), Pennsylvania Farmers Union (PFU), and National Family Farm Coalition's Dairy Subcommittee (NFFC). With the support of Pro Ag, PFU, and NFFC, I am speaking to oppose the Agri-Mark proposal to increase the make allowance.

This is the third time I have written my testimony. The first time I ripped it up because I didn't have enough "facts". The second time I ripped it up because of too many facts! So, this time it's simply from my heart. I don't need 10 pages of facts that could be right, or wrong, interpreted, misinterpreted, or skewed to suit whomever.

After over 40 years of dairy farming and always being required to be evermore efficient, in order to survive, my husband, Eugene, and I have no one who wants to continue dairy farming. Our family is typical of thousands who love our way of life but are disappearing. Why?

Today we may have about 60,000 dairy farm businesses left in the whole United States and we're losing about 5,000 a year. Why? Could it be because tired farmers are also "just plain tired of taking whatever is doled out to us" for our raw products and paying out whatever is asked for whatever we need to stay in business?

It is long past time for a change! Farmers need to receive what they rightfully deserve, which is a cost of production and some profit. Fairness!

What recourse do farmers have when all of our costs go up and our incomes go down? We can't get it out of the marketplace, like co-ops should be doing.

If we try to produce more to increase our incomes, we get paid less for our milk! We can't seem to win.

If you can, tell me, "How will our dairy farmers survive?"

As one of the "interested parties" who I believe should have been properly notified about this hearing and given ample time to prepare our testimonies, I am again

asking you to turn down the petitioners request. This would require the petitioners to also become ever more efficient and use their powers to get their profits from the marketplace.

When considering all the petitions and testimony presented, I'm asking you to please think "Dairy Farmer" instead of just Agri-Mark, L.O.L.'s, I.D.F.A.'s and etc., whenever increased costs and lower incomes are mentioned.

The farmers' "money well is going dry." Besides, without farmers, what will we need co-ops for?

Oh, by the way. Is Agri-Mark even a co-op? Or is Agri-Mark a Delaware corporation? What effect will California's response to any increase have? Will the petitioners simply return for another Make Allowance increase?

We need a different pricing system. How about 608 c (18)? The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 clearly intended for our nation's farmers to be protected and consumers to have a safe, secure, and adequate food supply. (Not unsafe, illegal MPC, and etc.)

Will all continue as is at our peril? I repeat, "Any Nation That Cannot Feed Itself is Not Free!"

Thank you all for your time and consideration.