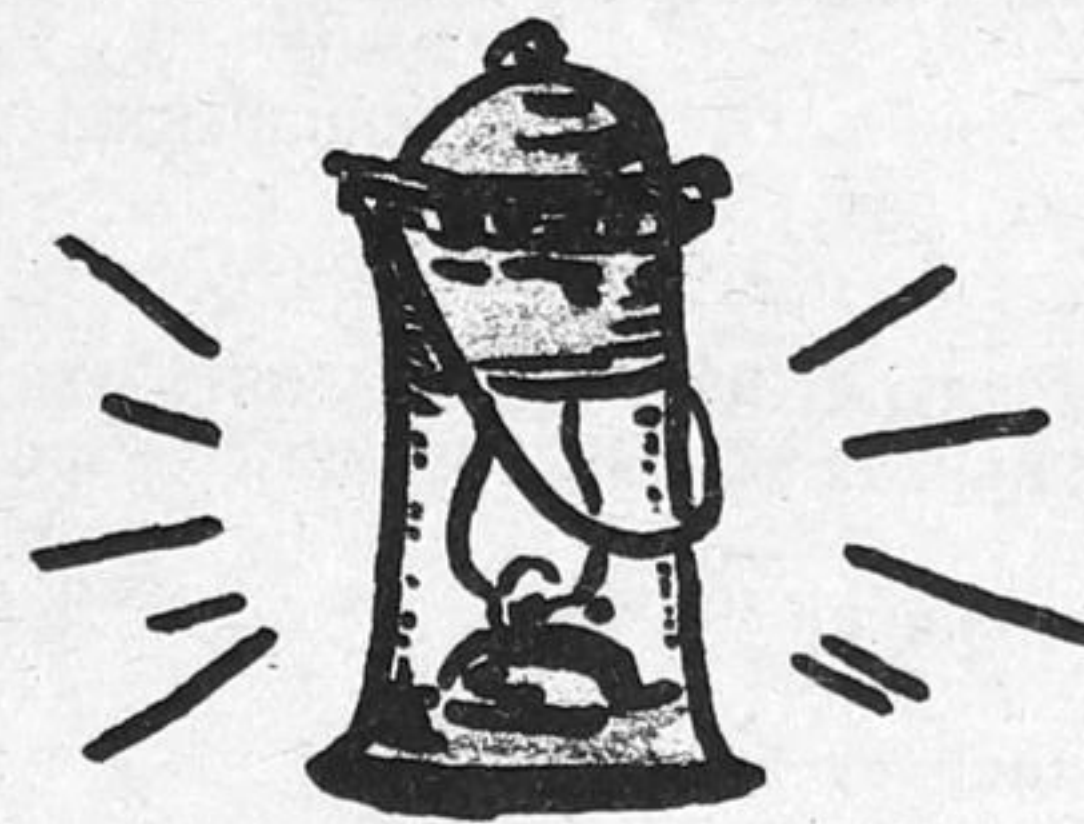


North Leeds LANTERN



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GOOD BYE TO THE MILK CANS

Milk cans, which have for generations been the symbol of dairy farming in Leeds may soon be no more than an interesting collectible sold at auction sales. The Ontario Milk Marketing Board has decreed that as of October 31, all dairy farmers in Ontario must convert to bulk milk tanks. The reason for this legislation according to Freeman Miller, field representative for the OMMB, is the increasingly high cost of transporting milk in cans. In addition, there is greater control over the quality of milk shipped in tanks as compared to cans.

The conversion to bulk handling equipment is a costly venture. Mr. Miller estimated it to cost between \$4,000 and \$10,000, depending on whether a milk house would have to be constructed to accommodate the new tank. Some local dairymen felt the cost could run upwards of \$15,000. The government has offered no financial incentives or special loans to assist dairy farmers who are facing this costly conversion.

Many Leeds farmers, especially those nearing retirement have decided to go out of the business rather than convert. In April of this year there were still 142 can shippers out of approximately 500 dairy producers in Leeds County. Out of these only 13 have converted to bulk tanks, and 29 have ceased shipping milk altogether. One can only wonder what opportunities for earning a living will be available for so many of our area farmers who have been forced into early retirement.

FORFAR DAIRY FEELS THE EFFECTS

The effect of this legislation is going to be particularly hard on the farmers who ship their milk to Forfar Dairy. The present system is a very efficient one for these dairymen. Cans are delivered by the farmers themselves to the factory each day. After the milk is dumped the cans are washed automatically by the can washer there and the farmers return home with their empty cans.

With the new legislation this will no longer be possible. The milk will be delivered to the factory by truck and it will make very little difference where the milk originated.

Of the six farmers who are now shipping cans to Forfar only three have indicated that they will switch to bulk tanks.

In an effort to gain an exception to the rule, members of Forfar Dairy held meetings in August with Leeds MP Jimmy Auld and the Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food. Forfar dairy men felt that since they hauled their own milk cans and since their cans were washed automatically at the factory they should be exempt from this ruling. Furthermore, the Forfar Cheese Factory indicated that they would be willing to accept milk cans from other dairy farmers in the vicinity who still wanted to ship cans. As news of this possible exception spread, dairy farmers from as far away as Brier Hill contacted Forfar Dairy in hopes that they could ship their cans to the factory.

In a decision handed down by Mr. Neuman, Minister of Agriculture, on August 10, however, these hopes were dashed. There was to be no relaxation of the ruling nor any exceptions to the rule. In spite of meetings with many protesting Ontario producers, Mr. Neuman stated his first concern was with health standards and the quality of milk.

Only two options remain for those who still wish to operate using cans.

1) Markets will be guaranteed for those dairymen who will switch to cream production. The OMMB permits cream to be shipped in cans. However producers who switch will face a real drop in income and will have to supplement their income by raising pigs or calves which would use the skim milk.

2) The OMMB will permit producers to go together and share one communal bulk tank. This option is appealing mainly to the Amish farmers who will now be able to haul their milk cans to one communal tank.

Mr. Ross Stone has been active in trying to initiate some exception for the Forfar Cheese Factory. When he heard the news that there were to be no exceptions he stated that he wished that the OMMB could have allowed more alternatives for farmers who can not afford to switch to bulk tanks.

Lots to see at Plowing Match



By Sept. 27th, what is now an impressive crop of hydro poles on the Joyceville Sideroad will have become a fully serviced community of over 400 exhibits displaying the latest in farm machinery, seed, chemicals, services and agricultural technology. Greenlees Brothers and neighbouring farms near Kingston will become the site of THE 1977 INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH AND MACHINERY SHOW from Sept. 27 to Oct. 1st.

More than 200 contestants from different countries will compete for over \$35,000 in prize money. Plows will be drawn by tractors, horses and oxen and competitors will include veteran plowmen, parliamentarians and media representatives.

Displays will include the old methods along with the new. You'll see grain threshed with steam power and the most modern grain handling machinery displayed.

A separate womens' program has been planned and there will be rides for the children. There should be something for everyone on the 800 acre site and if past years are any indication almost everyone goes. Those of us in the area will not be confronted with the travel and accomodation problems which may have been associated with a visit to THE PLOWING MATCH in other years. Hopefully many Leeds County residents will be able to make the trip to Frontenac as such an opportunity may not present itself again soon.



Lloyd Stone delivers milk cans to Forfar Dairy. The shipping of milk in cans will no be permitted after Oct. 31

