

**President's Letter**  
**Gary Bonestroo**  
**February, 2008**

Happy New Year! It is a happy one for starters. But, what does the future have in mind for us. The experts say smooth sailing for 2008 with an \$18 milk price.

The weather experts said warm and dry weather. Well, I guess it hasn't been the coldest or wettest winter so far, but it hasn't been the warmest and driest either. Let me see. I'll get my crystal ball out. Oh no, it's broken, bratty kid been playing hockey with it. It didn't work very well anyway. Now what? I'll get my history book out. Let's see what we have here starting the year off with \$11 milk, wet pens and end the year with \$21 net milk. I guess the experts' kids have been playing with their crystal balls too.

So, why am I a little nervous about the future dairy industry? What do I know is going to happen? I'll figure out my break even...yes that's what I'll do and I'll have to do it every day, because it keeps going up every day. Let's see, maybe that high feed cost will slow production? That's not happening! Oh good, the Canada border is opening up for dairy heifer sales, and then sex semen one of my favorites (I'm joking). As Ben Yale stated in his last article, CWT won't be able to get rid of enough cows to balance the national herd. Even though it has worked before, and it has helped with regional milk, cutting cows out in the West and maintaining milk in the East, and that was one of the things the CWT was designed to do. But, in the end, we're going to have more milk nationally. So what now? Maybe CWT should do more export substitutes instead of herd reduction. I think that may be a good plan. It's not like we're giving the stuff away and the world price is high—just make it a little cheaper for them. This could be the biggest bang for our buck in the future. Let's get rid of some product before milk drops, because remember our costs keep going up every day! Oh yeah, we have a new farm bill. I feel so much better now—warm and fuzzy—yeah right!!

Now on a local note, some producers in the Clovis/Portales area got together to discuss some environmental issues that are affecting that district. We invited the New Mexico Environment Department Ground Water Bureau to come and talk to us about these concerns. One of the main concerns about the new conditions is the fact that they were adding to the new/renewed/modified permit drafts. They are getting really crazy...we all know we need to protect the groundwater, but is adding additional monitoring wells the way to go?? We think they need to use sound science and common sense in these permits. There must be a better way to protect the groundwater than adding more holes for water to go down...what'daya think? There were other issues that we were concerned about such as: ground water depth in areas different?; same regulations

apply?; monitoring wells-location-numbers-and the necessity; grazing issues; length of permit; soil samples are better monitoring than wells for pivots; existing dairies, with no change in operation, permit should be quicker; adding acreage should be allowed without reopening permit; cost to do all upgrades at dairies—need price cost to do. These were just some of the issues that were discussed. We will continue this discussion with NMED and our producers not only the Portales/Clovis area but in our other districts as well.

A committee was formed from the NE district to organize the concerns and presentations to NMED. The committee members are: Alva Carter Jr.- temporary chairman, Gary Bonestroo, Steve Hanson, John Paul Heavyside, Eric Palla, Art Schaap, Eddie Schaap, Ron Schaap, Mike Stark, George Vander Dussen. Technical help volunteers from meeting: Dr. John Borrelli (Texas Tech), Dr. Mike Brown (West Texas A&M), Kyle Keim (agronomist), Jay Lazarus (environmental consultant), Norman Mullins (consultant), Dr. Linda Scheffe (NRCS), Jay T. Snyder, Brad Wick, Chet Wyant (environmental consultant), and of course Sharon along with Walter Bradley (DFA). So we want to be sure to thank them for their time and energy.

Happy 2008 – may it be a prosperous and good year!