
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Dairymen's League Program**

**Radio Address — Dairymen's League Program — Albany,
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Urging Cooperative Steps for Betterment of the Dairy Industry

It is with genuine pleasure that I greet the members of the Dairymen's League Cooperative Association, who are assembled in their 800 local meetings throughout the New York Milk Shed this afternoon. To speak with you and all other farmers of the State, as well as our urban citizens upon the difficulties confronting one of the Empire State's greatest industries is a task that I turn to with a keen personal interest.

These current problems of the dairy industry to me appear matters of the utmost concern to our whole citizenship. The prosperity or lack of

prosperity of so substantial a part of our citizenship as is contained in the dairy group is a matter that should be of interest to every public-spirited citizen.

It is worth noting that New York State stands first in the production of milk for use in fluid form. It is a matter of historical record that this was the original dairy section of the nation. This State was the pioneer in the production of milk under strict sanitary conditions for a great city market. It may well be a matter of pride to all of us that the dairy industry has kept pace with the development of our cities and of other leading industries of the State.

Dairying has not progressed without the interest of the State. During the last two years the State government has taken definite and important steps to assist and protect agriculture in general, and dairying in particular. It was my privilege to organize an Agricultural Advisory Commission to which I called some of the best known leaders of the State's farming to aid in solution of some of the rural problems.

As a result of the work done by that Commission and with the cooperation of the Legislature, laws were enacted to provide better market roads, to reduce taxes, particularly road and school taxes, and to assist the State Department of Health in the production of even higher quality milk and cream to meet the exacting requirements of our consumers. The State's aid in T. B. eradication in cattle is too well known to require discussion here.

There are few, if any, industries that have more forceful support from State and municipalities alike. For years the departments of health of our State and of the various cities have given their approval to dairy products. True, they have acted to protect the consumers, to assure economical and healthful foods, but in so doing they have assured you greater outlets.

Dairy farmers as producers of one of the principal food supplies have an exceptional opportunity to protect and further the interests of their own industry. Our per capita consumption of milk is estimated at one pint per day. That means 13,000,000 pints for 13,000,000 people. But, as compared with some other nations our consumption of manufactured dairy products, particularly cheese, is low. It is with regret that I recognize the fact that even our producers on the farms of the State are not large consumers of these choice foods—foods that are among the most desirable from the nutritional and health standpoint.

It is important to the welfare of future generations that the babies of today shall have a sufficient supply of fresh wholesome milk. This is a matter that should interest every mother and father and all men and women who are interested in the welfare of our future citizens.

The controlling factor in the present condition of the dairy industry is the low ratio of consumption. New York City alone is consuming approximately 60,000 cans of fluid milk less per week than it did last year. This same ratio prevails throughout the State. Were consumption on a normal basis there would be little or no surplus of dairy products today.

There is a way out of this problem of under-consumption. There can be no worth-while turning of the trend without effort on our part, and no effort is likely to be made without leadership. You, the producers of milk, are the logical people to lead your industry back to a firm and sound basis. In the 800 local units of the Dairymen's League, meeting today, there are represented 45,000 dairy farms, with a total of 150,000 people. This group is organized. It has had experience and training in carrying out organized projects.

Why is it not feasible to utilize this mighty machine to turn the tide for the dairy industry?

Here is the machine, built, tested and ready to work. It seems to me that you have a most inspiring motive in the desire that every dairyman must have to relieve his business from the present conditions of under consumption. I can think of no better or quicker way of bringing about economic improvement for the whole State than to bring the dairy industry back to the position it is entitled to. Any betterment of the dairy industry is certain to react to the benefit of all our people. With farmers in a better position the business and finance of every community will be aided. A concerted

effort by dairy farmers might have an important effect upon the nation's depression.

A big cooperative program of this sort is not a selfish movement. It is a public health movement. That is the important phase of this whole problem. Every mother and every doctor in the land recognizes the necessity for an adequate consumption of milk and milk products by babies and by adults.

By raising the economic standards of any large group of people, we improve the business of all to some degree. But, of more far reaching importance is the fact that any improvement of health standards is certain to spread and benefit countless others. Health is infectious, almost as much so as disease. The man who is well physically radiates good cheer among those whom he works, lives and plays. He so enjoys his health that he wants his fellow men to participate in his good fortune, and he spreads the gospel of drink-more-milk, eat-an-apple-a-day, or whatever it is that he regards as a factor in his prime condition. This is an economic matter as the less sick people we have, the less we must spend on the non-productive work of caring for the sick.

To me it appears that the thousands of dairy farmers sitting in local meetings to hear this radio program this afternoon can well take the initial step in what may properly become a nation-wide movement.

Right now you can band yourselves together to use more dairy products in your homes. You can start a movement that you, each individual one of you, can help to spread and carry on. The proof of the pudding is the eating. The dairymen should set an example by greater consumption of dairy products on the farms themselves.

For health and economy, use dairy products. Adopt that as an idea, as a purpose as an aim. Make it a daily rule in your own home. Enlist your friends and neighbors. Dedicate yourselves to the wider use of all forms of dairy products, to the drinking of cool, refreshing, high quality milk, to the use of cream and to those modern improvements upon the foods of the ancients—butter and cheese.

You have today an opportunity that is unique, inviting, yes, challenging, for here is a challenge to mankind to go forth and demonstrate to the world the power of himself and his brother dairymen to lift up their own industry. You have the organization with which to function. It is my earnest wish that the dairy farmers of New York State shall grasp this opportunity to demonstrate once again, and in a manner that the whole world must recognize, that the farmer is capable of helping himself. I resent and you resent the many suggestions that farmers are incapable of concerted action.

We have in the past given many splendid examples of effective cooperation. Here we have another great opportunity to prove that we can work together for the welfare of agriculture and for the betterment of the public health of the nation.
