USDA officials open bids for whole-herd buyouts

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Florida parishes bureau

AMITE — Bids on a federal “whole-herd buyout program” have been submitted by 108 of the 620 milk dairies in a three-parish area.

The bids were opened this week by U.S. Department of Agriculture officials here. Farmers are to be notified by March 28 whether their bids have been accepted.

If the USDA accepts a dairyman’s offer, which is based on a dollar amount per 100 pounds of production, the farmers will agree not to dairy or allow their milking facilities to be used for five years. The buyouts would take place between April 1 of this year and Sept. 30, 1987.

The intent of the USDA is to reduce the nation’s milk production by a billion pounds a year, which equates to the disposal of more than a million dairy cows. The herds purchased will be slaughtered and sold as beef.

According to Chuck Edwards, local Agriculture Stablization and Conservation Service director, 46 of the 303 dairy farmers in Tangipahoa Parish submitted bids ranging from $6 to $99.99 per hundredweight.

In St. Helena Parish, 24 of 97 dairymen submitted prices ranging from $5 to $50 per hundredweight.

In Washington Parish, 38 of 220 dairymen submitted offers ranging from $9 to $60 per hundredweight.