

USDA “Missed” 2005 MPC & Casein Imports

—skim milk equivalent of coast-to-coast milk tankers

Imagine a line of milk tank trucks full of skim milk that stretches from Los Angeles to Boston, with an “extra” 86 miles left over. That’s how long a line of milk tank trucks would be, if all the Milk Protein Concentrates (MPCs) and casein powders imported into the U.S. last year were listed as skim milk.

Los Angeles to Boston ... with 86 more miles on top! Hard to miss, right? Wrong, at least if you’re Jim Miller, who is the top dairy analyst at USDA’s Economic Research Service. Miller does not include MPC or casein in his annual summary of dairy exports. Thus, when USDA reports that dairy imports declined 7.7% in 2005, that number is hogwash, because it doesn’t include MPCs and casein.

In 2005, some 44,211 metric tons of MPCs entered the U.S. (97,438.84 lbs., +28.6% over 2004’s total).

And last year, casein imports totaled 108,200 metric tons (238,472,800 lbs., -2.7% below 2004’s total).

Combined, MPC and casein imports in 2005 equaled 11.6 billion lbs., when converted back to skim milk.

To make a long calculation shorter, conversion of these imported dairy protein powders to skim milk calculated MPC’s protein content at 70%, while casein’s



protein content was conservatively estimated at 90%. We’ll use a 70-foot length for a milk tank rig, with a capacity of 50,000 lbs. of milk.

Crunch all that data in your computer and the result is powdered dairy proteins equal, in terms of skim milk, to a line of milk tank trucks that would stretch 3101 miles—from Los Angeles to Boston, plus another 86 miles coming back west.

Hard to imagine how USDA’s ERS dairy “experts” can fail to include that large a volume of dairy imports year, when enumerating dairy imports. *The Milkweed* cites this statistic as the “worst of the worst” example of failed presentation of relevant dairy data by USDA. We deserve better.