Midwestern cheesemakers say milk availability has not edged much lower in recent weeks. Cheesemakers are already plotting out their milk plans for Thanksgiving week, when prices are expected to fall under some pressure. Spot prices this week, at report time, are $1.25- to $1.75-over Class III. For comparison, last year during week 43 spot milk prices were reported from $1-under to $.50-over Class.

Cheesemakers are in the process of locking in 2024 milk commitments. Cheese demand remains mixed from one plant to the next. Inventories range from balanced to tighter in the region. Barrel makers say their spot availability is short. Barrel market tones are firming, while blocks are holding in the mid-$1.70s. The bullish news, according to contacts, is that the block to barrel price gap on the CME is slim, which adds a stabilizing aspect when compared to a larger price gap of $.10 or higher.

Information for the period October 23 - 27, 2023, issued weekly

Secondary Sourced Information:

This week, a cooperative export assistance program accepted requests for export assistance on contracts to sell 2.2 million pounds (950 metric tons) of American-type cheese and 79,000 pounds (36 metric tons) of cream cheese. So far this year, the program has assisted member cooperatives who have contracts to sell 36.8 million pounds of American-type cheeses and 7.3 million pounds of cream cheese in export markets.