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U.S. Milk Men's Convention Here

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By George Murphy

More than 2500 dairy farmers and cooperative heads are expected to attend the 57th annual convention of the troubled National Milk Producers Federation, opening here today.

Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz will address the convention tomorrow morning, and the members will also hear from dairy produce spokesmen from Australia, France and Ireland.

The milk producers have suffered from a bit of image-tarnishing, federation secretary Patrick Healy said yesterday.

This is because of charges that one of its member organizations, the Associated Milk Producers, of San Antonio, Tex., has been linked to political kickbacks.

One of the association's attorneys, Stuart Russell, of Oklahoma City, has testified that he returned \$110,000 paid him as legal fees to the association, but was not aware that the money had been used for political contributions.

Healy said yesterday, "We've spent 57 years building up an image as a responsible lobbying group."

"Of course, we make contributions to political cam-

paigns. But each one is by check; each one is in compliance with the law, and reported to the House and the Senate officers.

"Look, the dumbest thing you can do is try to 'buy' a Congressman.

"In the first place, if you can buy him, he's not worth buying.

"In the second place, if you do buy him, maybe somebody from the other side comes along and offers him more money — so he goes with the other side, and you've just wasted your money.

"So we don't try to buy Congressmen; we do help our friends, and do hope they'll listen to our point of view — that's all we want. They may vote against us, but at least we've been able to give our side."

Healy said the Associated Milk Producers — the largest cooperative in the country, which pays about \$150,000 a year in dues to the National Federation — "acted independently, whatever they did.

"I don't know about it, and I'm glad I don't," he said.

The convention will run through Thursday.