

29.04.2009

The 29th April more than 25,000 milk producers rallied in Europe for fair milk prices

No end to protests. Fair framework conditions needed.



Photos

Hamm, 29 April 2009: More than 25,000 milk producers demonstrated today for fair milk prices in over ten European countries. Uniting under the slogan “Flexible volume regulation for fair milk prices”, they urged politicians to create the requisite framework conditions. Milk producers rallied with tractors and dairy cows in front of political institutions and handed over letters of demand to members of parliament, ministers and heads of government.

Romuald Schaber, President of the European Milk Board, commented: *“The excess supply of milk has resulted in existence-threatening milk prices in the whole EU. We urgently need to rebalance supply and demand. For dairy farmers to be able to do so in a coordinated way, politicians are called upon to adapt existing provisions.”*

All over Europe, excess supply of milk results in milk prices plummeting in free fall. The wrong decisions taken by politicians in 2008 are destroying one third of the value created on milk. Ernst Halbmayr, EMB Executive Committee member from Austria: *“It is synonymous with destroying 100% of the farmers’ income as producer prices of 25 cents leave no room for rewarding the farmers’ work. De facto, the families no longer generate any income from producing milk.”*

Today’s demonstrations were preceded by numerous protests in the whole of Europe. In early 2009 Greek, Latvian and Bulgarian farmers took to the streets to protest against unfair prices. 8,000 Slovak, Austrian, Polish, German, Hungarian, Slovenian and Lithuanian dairy farmers gathered in the Czech Republic in March. In April, more than 5,000 people rallied in Madrid to draw the public’s attention to the disastrous situation in many areas of agriculture and the total lack of perspectives for farmers.

Sieta van Keimpema, member of the EMB Executive Committee from the Netherlands, says: *“Milk requires stable framework conditions. It is a special product, it is available each day, and you cannot just stop production for a few days or weeks. When dairy farmers stop producing, they go out of production for good and the consumers in the respective region are no longer supplied with local milk.”*

Romuald Schaber: *“Pursuing the liberalisation strategy means abandoning supply control and external protection. This constitutes a great danger, not only for farms, it also jeopardizes the provision of the population with high-quality products.”* The European dairy farmers are calling upon politicians to jointly elaborate a concept to preserve milk production in Europe in future. Other sectors (e.g. fisheries, sugar production or the energy industry) have long realized that certain framework conditions are needed to regulate production. Flexible supply control is necessary to ensure that the market brings about a milk price that is fair for both consumers and producers.



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“Flexible volume regulation for fair milk prices”

This is the solution that was demanded by milk producers all over Europe today.

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