

18.06.2009

More than 3000 farmers with 1000 tractors in Brussels

More than 3000 milk producers with 1000 tractors make it clear to their heads of government: put milk at the top of the agenda! 4pm

European milk producers belonging to the European Milk Board (EMB) covered up to 800 kilometres with their tractors to call on their heads of government in Brussels to start taking the milk crisis seriously. They had travelled primarily from Germany, Belgium, France, Luxemburg and the Netherlands and gathered outside the EU Council building in which the EU heads of state and government are meeting today and tomorrow. The milk producers will stay with their tractors in the European capital until tomorrow, 19 June, and will hold a further demonstration towards midday.

Brussels, 18.06.09: Wherever you looked, the centre of Brussels was crammed with tractors on this Thursday, heading for the EMB demonstration outside the EU Council building. "The milk market situation has to be put at the top of the agenda", said Sieta van Keimpema, Vice-President of the EMB. Developments in recent years have cost many milk farmers throughout Europe their livelihood. The supply of high-quality milk to the people of Europe is at risk if dumping prices further dictate what happens.

In a letter the President of the EMB, Romuald Schaber, had called on the EU heads of state and government to act: "We request that at this meeting you advocate an immediate suspension of 5 per cent of the EU milk quotas for the 2009/2010 financial year. At the same time we consider a flexible application of the quota system indispensable. This is the way to prevent surpluses and market distortions and to save many millions in taxes in the future. The heads of state of Luxemburg and Germany, Jean-Claude Juncker and Angela Merkel, have already announced that they intend to address the milk issue during the so-called "fireside talk".

There is far too much milk on the market for cost-covering prices to be achieved. At the same time world demand is falling, exerting further downward pressure on prices. Flexible control of volumes could limit the supply of milk and enable a fair milk price to be achieved for consumers and dairy farmers. Suspending 5 per cent of the European milk quota would be a first step towards easing the pressure on the situation, as this would reduce milk production somewhat.

European dairy farmers cannot survive much longer with the structures that are in place. Subsidies only prop up the old, ailing system: they cannot overcome the crisis. A cost-covering price has to be achieved across the board in the market, with the help of flexible supply control. That is what the European dairy farmers are demonstrating for today and tomorrow outside the gates of the EU Council building in Brussels.

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Photos last two days available in the [gallery](#)

Photos of today will be in there from 5:15 on!

[Report on euronews](#)

[In France tractors went to Clermont-Ferrand on Thursday and today go to Nantes in the West of France](#)

[Press report in English](#)



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