

MILK-NEWS



Dear Dairy Farmers and Interested Parties,

A threatened species! That is what has become of us, the independent milk producers.

For our politicians – elected by the people but controlled by the world of finance – are we a species that must be saved? Certainly not in the eyes of the representatives of unfettered capitalism, whose dream is to be able to drive us beggars off our land. A return to the Middle Ages: Is that the future that awaits us?

In my native land, France, we are lucky enough to still have a few protective mechanisms that keep the tsunami at bay – such as the tenant farming regulations or the pre-emptive right. But for how long will we still have them?

Yet we are an irreplaceable species on which the entire economy is constructed! What can we do, though, for our species to survive? When you see the growing number of farmers that are giving up their dairy farms to grow cereals, the alarm bells must start ringing. Even if it is hardly surprising, really: one hectare of wheat means just under four hours' of work to produce eight tons; whereas one cow means 30 to 40 hours' work to produce eight tons of milk – for the same turnover!

But the worst thing for our species is undoubtedly that it is becoming older and older. It is 50+ years old on average, and the young generation wants nothing to do with a profession that has no future. All these figures speak for themselves and are testimony to the disappearance of the independent milk producer.

That is precisely why we must stand shoulder to shoulder and fight – alongside every dairy farmer in the EMB's big European family. Let us demonstrate together outside the European Parliament **in Brussels on 26 and 27 November**. It's now or never! For one thing is certain: if we don't become active ourselves the struggle is lost from the outset and tomorrow we're the serfs of the food industry.

If you don't ask, you don't get. Our future is entirely in our hands!

Richard Blanc (Member of the EMB Board)

1000 tractors to Brussels!

Huge demonstration of European dairy farmers outside the European Parliament in Brussels on 26/27 November

Dear fellow farmers,

We, the farmers of the European Milk Board, will be demonstrating outside the European Parliament in Brussels on 26 and 27 November. We call on every dairy farmer to be there and

actively support our common aim – flexible supply management to achieve cost-covering farm-gate prices. It is vital that we turn up in Brussels in large numbers. Bring your tractors along! We want to make an impression.

The protest is planned to coincide with key meetings in Brussels of the European Parliament (26/27 Nov.) and the EU Council of Ministers (28/29 Nov.), which will be deliberating and deciding on the reform of the EU Common Market Organisation. This includes the concept of voluntary supply constraint. In the last vote in Brussels on the abolition of the milk quota, those in favour scraped a victory with just 18 votes to 17. This shows we have a realistic chance!

**Join us in Brussels on 26/ 27 November!
Now is the time to bring our concern to Brussels!**

The demonstration will take place early in the afternoon of 26 November with as many tractors as possible. We do not just want to make speeches but intend to remind politicians of their duty. In the early evening we invite everyone involved to a panel discussion with key policy-makers. The demonstration will continue the following day. Rally your colleagues in your region to make the protest a total success. If you want things to change, come to Brussels!

Romuald Schaber (President of the EMB)

Members' Meeting in Croatia gives decisive boost to big demo in Brussels

The second EMB Members' Meeting this year was held in Tuhelj Toplice, Croatia, from 23 to 25 October. Those attending took the opportunity to discuss in depth the drastic milk market situation in Europe, and to draw from the warm encounter with European friends and colleagues new strength for future campaigns of action.

The focal issue of this Members' Meeting was what are known as the transformation countries in Eastern and Southeast Europe. The climax was an international milk conference entitled "Milk production in Croatia: opportunities and risks of joining the EU". With factual presentations and a lively exchange of opinions, this conference provided a comprehensive overview of the situation in the Eastern European milk markets and pointed up ways for a successful start of the Croatian dairy farmers in the EU. Besides many fellow farmers from Croatia, representatives of Polish and Latvian milk producer organisations had also been invited.

There was an exhaustive discussion among the EMB members following an urgent appeal from the EMB Board to all the dairy farmers of Europe, calling on them to join in a demonstration outside the European Parliament on 26 November. The EMB members were unanimous in their opinion that the thrust of the dairy farmers' protest must not relent at all now, and that a huge demonstration now or never was the only way to secure the dairy farmers' livelihood.

A particularly joyous event at this Members' Meeting was the welcoming of OPL from Spain as a new EMB member. A visit to a Croatian farm was generally appreciated and a presentation of the initial results of the "EU Study of Co-operatives" by Professor Hanisch from Humboldt University in Berlin aroused great interest. The EMB members explained their standpoint on co-operatives in the dairy sector forcefully to Mr Hanisch and now very much hope that their ideas will be followed up.

At the end of the three days everyone present thanked their Croatian friends for the smooth organisation and the enjoyable time. The members of the EMB will certainly have had nothing but fond memories to take home with them. Perhaps even more important than the content of the programme was that this Members' Meeting reinforced the cohesion of the EMB as a family and gave a huge boost to the members in facing the imminent challenges, none more so than the big demonstration in Brussels on 26 November.

Christian Schnier (EMB)

FFA Red Light for UDF Management at AGM

Please find below the press release of Farmers for Action (FFA) about a protest on Thursday, 18th October.

Farmers For Action UK NI mounted a protest at United Dairy Farmers annual general meeting last Thursday night in Cookstown. Leaflets were given out to UDF members at the hotel entrance.

FFA UK Chairman David Handley stated that “UDF Management are the one of the larger processors’ in the UK unwilling to talk to or co-operate with FFA! It beggars to question what have they got to hide, yet they expect to take large GB cheese orders at their farmer members’ expense by poor returns in their milk cheques, something that FFA will not tolerate!”

Meanwhile William Taylor, FFA UK NI co-ordinator, stated that “no sensible FFA communication with UDF Management in recent years clearly shows just how far out of touch with the vast majority of their members’ financial needs UDF management is becoming. This is underscored by the number of UDF members who have handed in their resignation and United’s persistent position at the bottom of the NI milk price league.” FFA’s leaflets laid bare the truth to UDF members’. William Taylor concluded: “FFA UK is 100% behind the founding principles of UDF, principles that need reinstating immediately to benefit the Northern Ireland dairy farmers!”

Christian Schnier (EMB)

Appeal to the French President

The French EMB member organisation APLI wrote a letter to François Hollande, the President of France, drawing his attention to the urgent crisis in French agriculture and in Brittany in particular.

Dear Mr President,

When you visited the international livestock trade fair SPACE in Rennes, you took a position on the future of French agriculture. You stated your express intention to sell our products with added value throughout the world to guarantee a trade surplus that is substantially lacking at the moment.

For a long time French agriculture generated trade surpluses thanks to the farms’ increasing productivity. For decades farmers strove to implement environmental regulations and observe directives on animal welfare. They invested to make their means of production “competitive”. Yet the reality remains the same, unfortunately: the failure of the Doux Group’s poultry export model, farmers giving up farming, the failure of the pig production model, crippling debts – and we are now feeling the consequences.

How is it that the agriculture model, which created so many jobs and so much growth – especially in Brittany – is now on the verge of disaster? The deregulation of the markets, unbridled liberalisation, speculative flows of capital in the agricultural markets, the financial dumping of the dollar markets, unfair competition in the social and environmental sphere, even within the EU: all these facts damage morale and destroy any incentive for the French farmers to face the challenges that you wish to throw up. Young men and women are refusing to take on the family farm. Young

people are not prepared to invest in huge structures that are not profitable. In this way farms will gradually vanish from the villages.

Pork and poultry production is declining, as will milk production soon, although we are promised an expansion of world markets. In speeches we are told again to "conquer the world markets". But with what means? Where are the hoards of young farmers who believe in a future full of prospects? We are of the opinion that only strong political will to regulate the markets can put an end to speculation. What is more, it is indispensable that rules in the social and environmental sphere be harmonised, in Europe at least. The choice of a strong currency must also go hand-in-hand with import controls.

In the context of such political decisions we, the farmers of Europe, want to guarantee European consumers quality food at fair prices without public subsidies. Time and again we have proposed mechanisms for regulating the markets that would not cost the general public a cent. I call on you to listen to us, for the sake of the future of agriculture in France and Europe.

Gwenaël Le Berre (APLI Bretagne)

Croatian milk producers go on strike

Thousands of dairy farmers went on a milk strike in Croatia from 22 to 25 October. The strike was organised by a group of milk producers opposed to the incumbent Croatian government. The farmers themselves say that 80 per cent of the milk producers joined in the strike, whilst the government puts the figure at just 8 per cent. The striking dairy farmers' principal demand was for a rise in the milk price from the equivalent of 28 cents to 54 cents. Unfortunately the strike produced no concrete outcome.

Milan Husnjak (HSUPM)

EMB Calendar

Please find below some of the most important events in November 2012:

- 14.11.: Meetings with MEPs in Brussels
- 14.11.: Meeting with Latvian milk producers at the Eurotier fair in Hannover, Germany
- 19.11.: Press conference about milk producers demonstration in Brussels
- 21.11.: Meeting with the Estonian minister for agriculture in Tallinn
- 26./27.11.: Big milk producers demonstration in Brussels

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