

Press release:

More than 25,000 milk producers rallied today in Europe for fair milk prices

No end to protests. Fair framework conditions needed.

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.

“Flexible volume regulation for fair milk prices”

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

Contact:

Romuald Schaber (DE): 0049/15155037174; Sieta van Keimpema (NL, EN, DE): 0031/612168000; Ernst Halbmayr (DE) 0043/6649249635; Sonja Korpeter (FR, EN, ES): 0049/1786021685

Annexes:

- 1) *Overview of today's actions listing the respective contact persons*
- 2) *Demands of the European Milk Board*

**You will find the most recent information on the campaign as well as photographs in printable quality for download on our website:
www.europeanmilkboard.org**

Annex 1:

Overview of today's actions listing the respective contact persons

France/ OPL: Demonstrations with tractors, trailers, outside the prefectures nationwide, talks with prefects; meeting with Minister of Agriculture Barnier

Contact: Jean Louis Naveau - 0033/682922373

/APLI: handing over 1000 letter to prefect;

Contact: Pascal Massol - gaec.bouviale@wanadoo.fr

Germany/ BDM: demonstrations outside farming authorities in **Stuttgart with 10,000 people and 200 tractors** and in **Hanover with 4000 people and 15 tractors**

Contact: Romuald Schaber - 0049/1515503 7174

Spain/ PROLEC: Follow-up to big demonstration in Madrid on 16 April

1. Large gathering of dairy farmers, consumers, politicians 2. meeting with industry

Contact: Esther Lopera 0034/68 5990460

Austria/ IG-Milch: 2000 farmers and 400 tractors at big tractor rally to Vienna to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Chancellery, demands handed over to the Federal Chancellor

Contact: Ernst Halbmayr 0043/6649249635

Italy/APL: 400 farmers with tractors all over Northern Italy

Contact: Roberto Cavaliere 0039/335 635 6361

Tszech Republic: 5000 farmers at several protest marches (for example: at *square of Peasant Revolt* in Chlumec, near Hradec Králové); **Contact: Josef Kucera - 0042/0602359033**

Denmark/ LDM: Big manifestation aimed at the Danish candidates for the EU Parliament in Hovborg, Jütland; **Contact: Kjartan Poulson - 0045/21288899**

The Netherlands/ DDB, NMV: Press campaign as a follow-up to the big " Dairy Night" on 14/15 April; **Contact: Sieta van Keimpema - 031/612168000**

Belgium/ MIG: 800 farmers and 100 tractors at silent protest march and demonstration outside the Ministry in Namur, talks with Minister Lutgen;

Contact: Erwin Schöppges -0032/ 497904547

/BDB: open letter to dairies; Contact: Bernd Jacobs - 0032/495101064

Luxembourg/ LDB: Press conference in Luxembourg City, talk with politicians and representative of ministry, **very good media reactions**

Contact: Fredy Martines - 0035/2998831

Scotland DFOS/ UK: more than 100 dairy farmers with calves and Faironikas talking to politicians in front of Scottish parliament, **Contact: Doris Robertson - 0044/7979 315083**

Switzerland/ Uniterre: Campaign "Heidi and little flowers" in front of dairy industry (Ependes) **Contact: Rudi Berli - 0033/450567821**

Annex 2

Demands of the European Milk Board (EMB)

There are ways out of the current crisis that has the dairy market in a stranglehold. The milk producers – represented by the European Milk Board – and politicians at national and EU level must cooperate to implement these solutions successfully.

The milk market concerns everyone. A milk market in turmoil has a mid-term and long-term impact on the provision of consumers with fresh and healthy milk products. Farmers going out of production are also reflected in higher unemployment numbers, less value creation in rural areas and changing landscapes.

In order to correct the current market situation as quickly as possible in view of the crisis and to achieve a cost-covering milk price of 40 eurocents, the dairy farmer organisations agreed on the following demands at their Annual Assembly on 18/19 February 2009 in Brussels, urging politicians to create the requisite framework conditions:

1. The regulation of volumes must be made flexible immediately; the yardstick for quota adjustments must be a cost-covering milk price.
2. This requires setting aside quota reserves that can be released for production as and when needed. And that is dependent on effectively restricting national netting in every EU country.
3. To take quotas out of production the mechanism of temporarily leasing out quotas by the EU has to be introduced immediately.
4. The 5 x 1% quota increases voted in back in November 2008 must likewise be released for production only as and when required.
5. The fat correction factor has to be left at its level hitherto (0.18).
6. A legal basis must be created that enables the EU-wide introduction of producer-financed levies.
7. Surplus products should now be bought up immediately and used in a way that does not damage the market, to ease the pressure on the market and thus to raise the producer price as quickly as possible.

The milk producers organized under the umbrella of EMB jointly present these demands to politicians all over Europe. The dairy farmers are prepared to put these demands into practice - including all of the consequences. Only a milk market balanced by a system of supply control involving the milk producers is capable of securing the future of dairy farming and hence the provision of consumers with high-quality milk products in all parts of Europe.

Brussels, 18/19 February 2009