

Dear Dairy Farmers and Interested Parties,

I would like to take this opportunity to think outside of the European milk policy for once and put the EMB's political commitment in a wider context. At the end of last year I was invited by NGOs to visit Burkina Faso in West Africa, and was able to find out about the living conditions of the milk producers in this fascinating but sadly very poor country. I became convinced during the trip that despite the different standard of living in West Africa and Europe the dairy farmers' problems are quite similar: in neither part of the world do producers receive fair pay for their work.

Korotoumou Gariko, a highly intelligent and politically committed dairy farmer graphically described this terrible situation. I met Korotoumou for the first time in Burkina Faso and last month returned the compliment by welcoming her to my farm in Belgium. She believes that cheap imports of milk powder from western industrialised countries are mainly to blame for small farms like hers with fifty-five animals being in difficulty and village structures being destroyed in her land. This is a clear indication that the growth ideology of the European dairy industry not only ignores the needs of farms in Europe but also has a severe impact on other continents. This is the flipside of the globally deregulated trade with dairy products sold to us time and again by our own politicians and representatives of the dairy industry as salvation and a concept for the future.

Given the scenario of hunger in Africa I also asked Korotoumou what she thought about our having thrown away milk in the fields in Europe during the big milk strike in 2009. She simply replied that she did just the same whenever she couldn't sell her milk because prices were too low. One can of course only shake one's head and think what madness it must be when farmers in Africa, where milk is even more precious than in Europe because production is much lower, resort to such desperate measures. And when farmers and people with such different cultural backgrounds as in Africa and Europe reach the same conclusion that it cannot go on like this, then something must be fundamentally wrong.

This realisation that we with our demands in Europe are not alone and are also struggling on behalf of milk producers in other continents, should therefore motivate us even more for our political work in the EMB. Our demands are currently being supported by a report published in March from the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter. The report stresses that what rich countries will have to do in the future is abandon an export-oriented agricultural policy, leaving space for local smallholders in developing countries. An article in this issue of the EMB Newsletter summarises the key points made in the report.

Erwin Schöpges (Member of the EMB Board)

EMB Newsletter April 2014

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Travel report: Europe has to be experienced first-hand! German dairy farmers visit their counterparts in Italy and Switzerland.

Stefan Lehmann, member of the Board of the German EMB affiliate BDM, was delighted that a total of 102 dairy farmers had signed up for the BDM members' trip to northern Italy. At short notice – but very gladly – Lehmann had to organise a second coach and a second hotel. On Friday, 7 March, at 1.30 in the morning the trippers set off from Zell am Harmersbach in southern Germany heading for Switzerland.

After the Gotthard Tunnel it became daylight and the sun was soon shining brightly on the snow-capped peaks of the Alps.

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United Nations report: The world's food systems need to be radically and democratically redesigned

to food, Olivier De Schutter.

The following press release was published on 10 March 2014 on the occasion of the publication of the final report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right

GENEVA – The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, today called for the world's food systems to be radically and democratically redesigned to ensure the human right to adequate food and freedom from hunger. "The eradication of hunger and malnutrition is an achievable goal. However, it will not be enough to refine the logic of our food systems – it must instead be reversed," Mr. De Schutter stressed during the presentation of his final report to the UN Human Rights Council after a six-

year term as Special Rapporteur.

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Update on milk market situation in Ireland

Utmost in the mind of dairy farmers in Ireland this spring is milk price and quota. Milk price paid to dairy farmers from dairy processors is currently 38 to 39 cents per litre. Based on estimated milk deliveries as submitted by milk purchasers for the period up to the end of February 2014, Ireland is 1.26% over quota when account is taken of the butterfat content of milk deliveries during that period.

Calving season is in full swing as most herds in Ireland are based on spring production systems.

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New study results reveal shortfall in milk production

The following press release was published on 3 March 2014 on the occasion of the quarterly updating of the study on milk production costs in Germany:

(Brussels, 3rd March 2014) The new results of the cost study carried out by the German Office for Agriculture and Agricultural Sociology BAL show that the average price paid to dairy farmers in Germany in October 2013, i.e. 41,92 cents/kg, does not cover production costs. For the same period, production costs amounted to 44,12 cents/kg, thus revealing a gap of more than 2 cents

per kilogramme.

The study, launched by the European Milk Board (EMB) and the German MEG Milch Board, also shows production costs according to three different

regions.

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Fair Milk in Belgium awarded prizes

This year the Fairebel chocolate milk from the product range of Fair Milk in Belgium was awarded one of the coveted Belgian Golden Archers in the "Fair Product" category. The prize is offered and awarded every year by the Belgian distribution organisation "Comité Royal Belge de la Distribution" and its trade publication "Vertrieb heute". The Faircoop co-operative farmers who market Fair Milk in Belgium under the brand name Fairebel thus have an image-boosting success to announce that is encouraging for the further development of the project. The award ceremony was held on 21 March 2014 in Brussels.

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Free trade in cheese – is it really a success story?

"Positive trade balance for Swiss cheese" says Swiss Cheese Marketing (SCM) in its latest press release on last year's trade figures. Swiss cheese exports did indeed rise by 1.8 per cent in 2013. Yet there is another side to this coin: cheese imports went up 2.5 per cent in 2013.

Since the beginning of free trade in cheese with the EU in July 2007, not only have Swiss cheese exports abroad increased, but cheese imports have continually as well.

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EMB Calendar

These are some of the EMB Board's key dates in April 2014:

- 02.04.: Board meeting in Brussels
- 15./16.04.: General Assembly in Brussels
- 16.04.: Meeting with the EU Commission in Brussels on the monitoring agency for the EU milk market

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