

## Dear Dairy Farmers and Interested Parties,

A year full of work and excitement is coming to a close for the European Milk Board. An opportunity for the Board to sum it up in brief. And we venture a cautious look ahead. But one thing is certain already: things are on the move in European politics and in the co-operation among dairy farmers. Perhaps more than the individual milk producers in Europe themselves realise. The EMB has provided some key input into the process of accelerating some changes.

### 2012, year of crisis

For us dairy farmers, 2012 will go down in history as the second year of crisis after 2009. At the beginning of the year the milk price crashed throughout Europe. The rising costs of almost every means of production further exacerbated the situation.

### Signs of a re-think

This second milk crisis in only three years forced some governments of the EU to re-think.

In several initiatives Poland, Spain, Portugal and Lithuania called for intervention in the market to prop up the catastrophic milk prices. The belief that the invisible hand of the market would control everything was dispelled by the recognition that policy-makers must guarantee a minimum of market rules. This development was underlined by rapporteur Michel Dantin's call to introduce a voluntary suspension of production as a crisis mechanism. In their statements on the CAP some MEPs even called for an extension of supply management until 2020.

### Milk Package not enough

The Milk Package, which was hotly disputed for many months, suddenly seemed to many politicians not to go far enough. Pity it took them so long to realise. The EMB had been banging on about it for a long time.

### No end of EMB campaigns of action in 2012

The EMB drew attention to the unsustainable situation of the dairy farmers with a whole series of campaigns on varying scales. In July, for instance, a milk lake was caused to overflow outside the European Parliament. And the EMB was also involved in the Good Food March to Brussels organised by a number of NGOs. The concluding conference in the Parliament became an impressive demonstration for a different CAP.

And finally the milk producers pulled up outside the European Parliament on 26/27 November with 1,000 tractors and 3,000 farmers. They sprayed milk over the building where the politicians were meeting. The point they were making was: the milk market is still on fire – it is cheaper to put it out with milk than water. In an emotional event on the second day the demonstrators remembered those farmers who had given up their farms in the last three years. In each and every one of these campaigns we repeatedly stressed our demand for a monitoring agency with flexible control of volumes to give the farmers cost-covering milk prices.

### Commissioner Ciolos announces measures

On 27.11.12, the second day of the big demonstration, Commissioner for Agriculture Ciolos addressed the demonstrators. He confirmed without a shadow of a doubt that the Milk Package that had just been adopted was not enough to solve the problems of the milk market. He announced new proposals for 2013 to stabilise milk prices and give the producers some prospects at last. He

## EMB Newsletter December 2012

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said it was difficult, however, to satisfy demand. He ended up by calling on the EMB to put forward intelligent proposals.

### **On the right track – carry on the fight with conviction**

At last the politicians seem to have realised that markets do not operate themselves. What now has to be done is to present the EMB's sound proposals to the decision-makers. Vigilance is the word, though, precisely because of the evident readiness of the decision-makers. The big groups and their supporters in the farmers' organisations are already up in arms. They will try to prevent milk prices that cover the full costs and the requisite adjustment of the volume to the market with high added value. Despite all the difficulties the dairy farmers are on the right track. Carry on with all your might. It will be worth it!

We wish you a reflective Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Kind regards,

*The EMB Board*

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## **European Milk Market on Fire: Two-day Demonstration of Dairy Farmers in Brussels**

**The milk market is on fire. This is why milk producers from all over Europe came to Brussels to call attention to their unbearable situation and symbolically put out the fire on the milk markets. For a long time, milk prices have not been able to cover production costs and thousands of dairy farmers were already obliged to give up their farms.**

(Brussels, 26 and 27 November 2012) Around 2500 members of the European Milk Board (EMB), the European federation of milk producers' organisations, as well as of supporting organisations are protesting today and tomorrow with about 1000 tractors in the European capital, in the framework of the demonstration "1000 tractors to Brussels".

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## **Report on my trip to Brussels**

In his report below, German milk producer Gerd Arras from the Odenwald gives a vivid description of his experience of driving his tractor to Brussels for the big dairy farmers' demonstration. Gerd Arras is a member of the German Dairy Farmers' Association (BDM) – one of two EMB member organisations in

Germany.

*No-one can take my impressions and experiences of the 4-day tractor ride away from me. It was a supremely well organised journey and demo. We left a lasting impression in Brussels and on the way – we had many conversations with passers-by, the television, print media and radio. Many fellow farmers who were unable to come with us bade us farewell and then gave us a warm welcome on our return. This co-operation among us BDM members was simply fantastic. It does one good to gain so much recognition after this huge feat. It is marvellous, by the way, to drive along Germany's roads at 40 kph in*

*wonderful weather.*

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## **EU agricultural market organisation: legislation now in the decisive phase**

Since late July when the Members of the European Parliament on the Agricultural Committee submitted nearly 2,000 applications for amendments to be included in the review of the agricultural market organisation, the Parliament has had its work cut out finding compromises between the different political stances. Whatever happens, the number of applications has to be slashed for them to be voted on.

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## **The Caesar Prize for Advertising: the “Fair Milk Luxemburg” packaging comes second**

**The packaging design of the “d’fair Mëllech” brand Luxemburg came a proud second place in the awarding of the Austrian Caesar Prize for Advertising 2012 in the “Packaging” category.**

The Caesar Prize 2012 award ceremony was held in Linz on 22 November. Berthe Elsen, Member of the Board of Fairkooperativ Letzebuerg, accepted the certificate on behalf of her organisation. SPS-MARKETING – an Austrian advertising agency – had created the design for the pan-European Fair Milk campaign.

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## **Slovakian dairy farmers’ declaration of solidarity**

In a letter to the EMB, the Slovakian dairy farmers expressed their support for and solidarity with the big dairy farmers’ demonstration in Brussels on 26 and 27 November:

*Dear European Milk Board*

*Dear European dairy farmers*

*Dear colleagues*

*The Slovak dairy farmers would like to express their appreciation, support and solidarity with your initiative to organize a demonstration on 26-27 November 2012 in Brussels.*

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## **Belgian NGOs and farmers’ organisations in Africa support the dairy farmers**

The following declaration expresses the solidarity of Belgian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and farmers' organisations from Africa with the European dairy farmers' protest in Brussels:

*Belgian NGOs and numerous farmers' organisations in Africa affected by milk exports have mobilised to support the milk producers' demands in the milk strike. The demand for a fair and remunerative price has always been a legitimate one.*

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## EMB Calendar

**Please find below some of the most important events in December 2012 and January 2013:**

- 11.12.: EMB-Board Meeting in Brussels
- 12.12.: Meeting of the advisory group on milk at the European Commission in Brussels
- 13.-15.01.: Speech at the Semex Dairy Conference in Glasgow, Scotland

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