

## Dear dairy farmers, dear interested parties,

Ever since it was founded under the umbrella of the European Milk Board, the Fair Milk brand, and its various national chapters, has championed a fair milk price for producers. Fair Milk has reduced farmers' anonymity, giving individual producers a face and creating a direct link to consumers who can support dairy farmers through the premium paid to participating dairy producers for every litre of milk sold.

### Fair Milk means: cutting out the middleman

*Fair Milk = of farmers, by farmers, and for farmers, but also for consumers*

Farmers are managing the entire Fair Milk process, therefore cutting out the middleman and making sure all benefits go to the participating producers. This also creates a direct link to consumers, which is very valuable. Normal consumers who are aware of the precarious situation of many dairy farmers are asking: what can we do? By buying products displaying the Fair Milk label, which include drinking milk alongside other dairy products such as cheese, butter and chocolate milk, shoppers can make sure they are getting a high-quality, local product for which the farmer was fairly remunerated.

### Fair Milk means: a fair pricing policy

Enabling producers to run their farms sustainably with a farm-gate milk price that fully covers production costs while providing a decent income for farmers should be a given. However, reality is different. A fair pricing policy allowing family farms to flourish, to produce high-quality milk while helping to preserve cultural landscapes is more crucial than ever.

### Ukraine war, inflation, future crises

With current food prices spiking, or whenever an emergency erupts, consumers are tempted to attach less importance to quality and to ensuring farmers receive sufficient income. And yet, especially in times of uncertainty, with food sovereignty and security at stake, sustaining farmers is vital. This can be done by providing them with a sustainable farming income, or they won't be able to keep producing. And without farmers, there is no food.

### Fair Milk means: farmers are standing strong, negotiating sustainable prices with retailers

Negotiations are rarely easy. This is especially true today given the current circumstances, rendering negotiations for fair retail prices a tall order. The Fair Milk projects are meeting this challenge. The European Milk Board understands the challenges linked to farmers' weak bargaining position. It is therefore important to future-proof the strong brand that is Fair Milk which, in turn, strengthens the power of farmers.

### Fair Milk also means more environmental sustainability

In the field of environmental sustainability too, Fair Milk has taken important steps, from the use of non-GMO feed in Germany, FSC-certified packaging in Belgium to the collection and recycling of empty packaging under the banner of Fair Milch Säuliamt in Switzerland.

**A green blueprint:** While the proposed European Green Deal, with its 'Farm to Fork' and sustainability strategies, does

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## Contact

### EMB - European Milk Board asbl

Rue du Commerce 124  
B-1000 Brussels

Phone.: +32 - 2808 - 1935

Fax: +32 - 2808 - 8265

[office@europeanmilkboard.org](mailto:office@europeanmilkboard.org)

[www.europeanmilkboard.org](http://www.europeanmilkboard.org)

not include a concept to ensure a fair income for farmers, the Fair Milk projects certainly do. All dairy farmers across Europe deserve fair conditions. And the Fair Milk initiative leads by example: a handy blueprint for all of Europe to follow.

*Sieta van Keimpema, EMB President*

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## Fair Milk: a true sign of solidarity

© Fairebel

*small contribution through Fair Milk.*

*With the Fair Milk project, producers do not just advocate for their profession, they also take action to help people in need. As this project belongs to dairy farmers and is managed by them alone, they can react quickly and make their*

*Please read on for reports from different Fair Milk countries about their concrete action during crises.*

### France

In early March 2022 and in collaboration with the radio station Echo FM, Fair Milk in France donated two pallets of milk to Ukraine. Jean-Luc Pruvot, President of FaireFrance, says: "I was at the Agricultural Fair when Didier Cornet, my contact at Echo FM, called me to ask if we could sell them one or two pallets of milk to send to Ukraine. After a short conversation, I quickly offered to make a donation to support the people of Ukraine in our own way because we all know that during a war, everything becomes critical: shelter, food, medical assistance... As farmers, the least we can do is help in

addressing the issue of food."

### Belgium

Fair Milk in Belgium also provided Fair Milk products to people in need. Fairebel donated a pallet each of whole milk and chocolate milk on 7 March 2022 to Ukraine. When the Pepinster municipality in Liège province was flooded in mid-July last year, Fairebel sent a pallet of chocolate milk for the affected residents and many volunteers providing assistance.

### Germany

Between July and October 2021, Fair Milk in Germany donated six pallets of chocolate milk and four pallets of milk and delivered them directly to the Ahr region that was severely affected by flooding. Oliver Koch, dairy farmer and Fair Milk participant from Harschbach in the Westerwald region, organised this donation and did some amazing work in this context.

### Luxembourg

Together with the Kentucky restaurant in Lentzweiler, Fair Milk in Luxembourg donated long-life milk to people in Ukraine in early March.

### Switzerland

Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, Faireswiss is donating a pallet of Fair Milk (720 litres) to an association receiving Ukrainian refugees in Geneva.

*Vanessa Langer, European Milk Board*

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## Meet our members: face to face with D'fair Me?llech farmers in Luxembourg

*In 2011, 48 dairy farmers from Luxembourg joined up to found Fairkoperativ and D'fair Me?llech, the local banner of the Fair Milk family. Since then, the number of members has grown to 56. With 10 cents going to participating farmers for every litre of milk sold, consumers in Luxembourg can support their dairy farmers directly.*

© D'fair Me?llech

D'fair Me?llech offers a range of 13 different dairy products, from fresh milk to chocolate milk, butter, cream, ice cream, cheese and yoghurt. Extra ingredients like chocolate that go into the ice cream are produced in collaboration with fair trade, making sure everyone involved, north and south, receives an honest price for their efforts.

But the cornerstone of everything that has been achieved is formed by our 56 members. We are thrilled to have each one be part of our adventure. [Here](#) you can discover the faces behind our great project. Meet Jean-Paul Willems from Angelduerf, the Theissen family from Schëmpech, and many, many more who are at the heart of D'fair Me?llech's success.

*Danielle Warmerdam-Frantz, D'fair Me?llech*

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## Fair Milk in Belgium: quality in harmony with fair production and marketing

© Fairebel

*East Belgium: In recent years, the "Fairebel" label has become synonymous with fair agricultural products of the highest quality. What began as a reaction to the milk crisis in 2009, developed into a real success story. "At a time when farmers feared for their livelihoods due to rock-bottom milk prices, they received no solutions from policy-makers and decided that it was time to take things into their own hands", remembers Faircoop President, Erwin Schöpges.*

### Fairebel, an initiative by and for farmers

A new brand was the solution: **Fairebel** was born! The aim of this new brand was to valorise regional agriculture and to make it less dependent on large corporations and their price dumping policies. Thus, Fairebel stands for "fair trade from and in Belgium". With this new strategy of self-managed marketing, cost-covering prices were quickly achieved, with participating farmers guaranteed a secure income and traditional family farms being given a lifeline. "Looking back, this was clearly a great idea that strengthened Belgian agriculture", says Erwin Schöpges. The Faircoop cooperative was founded by eight farmers – five of them from East Belgium. They engaged independently in negotiations with retailers to determine profit margins, balancing the two objectives of high-quality products for consumers on one hand, and more robust local farming structures on the other.

### Well established in East Belgium

Currently, 500 farmers from all over Belgium are members of Faircoop, with a good 80 of them from East Belgium. "We

lay special emphasis on the fact that we produce and thus distribute all over Belgium. This has allowed us, slowly but surely, to gain visibility among consumers”, says the Faircoop President. In this context, the figures speak for themselves: a total 800,000 litres of milk were sold in the first marketing year 2010. The cooperative reached its first interim goal in 2020 by selling 11 million litres, the equivalent of one litre per Belgian resident. In the last few years, this figure has risen even further to 13 million, and the trend remains positive. This quick growth shows that the products have been well received by consumers for whom quality is a major concern. While the cooperative carries out joint publicity campaigns and is responsible for lobbying, all cooperative members are called on to contribute locally. The idea is to emphasize direct contacts with consumers so that they, too, identify with the brand and its products. As a result, you can regularly find participating farmers at weekly markets or tastings, where they not only proudly present Fairebel's products but also provide consumers with background information.

### **100% Belgian butter**

In addition to drinking milk, Fairebel also makes chocolate milk, ice cream and grated cheese. For three years now, the cooperative has also been putting quality butter on the market. This butter is 100% Belgian and is made exclusively from Belgian milk. The participating dairy farmers commit to ensuring that their cows have access to pastures for at least six hours per day and for at least 120 days per year. This farming method, which guarantees maximum animal welfare, is the secret behind the unique and delicious taste. “In order to make Fairebel butter, we got together with one of the last family-run dairies in Belgium – the Olympia dairy from Herne in the Flemish-Brabant province. Olympia and the Van Impe family running it defend the same values we do and promote Belgian agriculture and fair remuneration for all stakeholders in the production chain”, says Erwin Schöpges. The milk used to make Fairebel butter comes exclusively from farmers in Wallonia and Flanders. “We collect the milk ourselves from the farmers and can attest to the quality of the milk and cream. This allows us to make pure butter. We use no additives as we trust the natural process where the excellent lactic acid bacteria at the Olympia dairy get to work to sour and flavour the cream. All these factors come together to give Fairebel butter its unique taste”, raves Erwin Schöpges.

### **20 litres of milk for 1 kilogramme of butter**

A total 20 litres of milk are necessary to produce a single kilogramme of butter. Modern scientific studies have debunked the widespread misconception that butter makes you fat and is not good for health. There has been a significant change in image when it comes to butter and it has finally regained its place in consumers' kitchens. According to Fairebel, this is clear from the current sales. The sales volume more than doubled from 250,000 packets in 2020 to over 500,000 packets last year. The initial months of this year have added to this boom as many new stores started stocking Fairebel butter. Fairebel is, therefore, quite confident that they will surpass the 1-million mark this year when it comes to packets of butter sold. “It is only thanks to our loyal customers, who do not go for cheap products or fall for offers from large companies, that we are able to continue living our dream of fair, cost-covering regional and national agriculture”, concludes Faircoop President Erwin Schöpges.

*Gerd Hennen, Fairebel*

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## **Fair Milk in Germany: the Ströbele family from Ehingen**

*Our programme members introduce themselves: the Ströbele family from Ehingen in Baden-Württemberg has farmed for over 200 years. Together with his wife and his three sons Lukas, Felix and Fabian, Gernot Ströbele runs his farm with 65 dairy cows and young cattle.*

© Andrea Münnekehoff, Die faire Milch

From April to October, the cows graze in pastures, depending on the weather. For the rest of the year, they live in a spacious free-stall barn with outside access as well as all sorts of “cow comforts” in the form of brushes and showers, which are highly appreciated. The staple feed (grass, maize and broad beans) is entirely grown by the family itself.

The location of the farm, right next to the church in the centre of the village, is perfect for direct sales. The Ströbeles sell **fair milk** and **fair chocolate milk**, as well as home-made pasta and apple juice from their own fruit meadows. A mobile cheesemaker also comes by regularly, with a range of delicious cheeses made from milk from the farm that are also sold on site.

The Ströbele family also offers a weekly delivery service and conveniently brings all its products to your doorstep within a range of 10 km.

*Andrea Münnekehoff, Die faire Milch, Germany*

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## France: dairy farmers unite in fairness and solidarity

© FaireFrance

*It would be difficult to find a dairy farmer who was left unscathed by the milk crisis of 2009. Rozenn Angenard, dairy farmer in the Ille-et-Vilaine department in Brittany, as well as Isabelle Rouyer and Cédric Dumaine, from the Orne department in Normandy, remember this period where they poured away their milk to protest the rock-bottom milk prices.*

They also admit that during this period “they gave a lot of milk away” and they remember “bartering with neighbours, consumers and other farmers”. The support from the French consumers and the solidarity among dairy farmers led to the creation of **FaireFrance**, a company set up by dairy farmers for dairy farmers. In order to become a member of FaireFrance, you have to contribute a minimum of € 1,000 in capital, “and a maximum of € 5,000”, adds Isabelle

Rouyer, one of the board members.

Like a shareholder in any other company, the producers take on the mission of promoting the FaireFrance brand among retailers and consumers. If this sounds scary, Rozenn, Cédric and Isabelle can put you at ease: “It’s just two days hosting a stand in a store close to you if you have invested € 1,000, and five days if you have invested € 5,000.”

However, in exchange for their time, farmers receive a bonus that brings the price for their milk, which they continue to sell to their dairy, to 45 cents per litre. “A decent income”, “remuneration that allows you to plan a holiday with your kids”, “an additional income to build up a retirement fund” – that’s what Rozenn, Isabelle and Cédric say. They also add that the FaireFrance initiative is about more than “just” income. It is “one big family where we can discuss our problems and get help”, says Rozenn with a smile. Thanks to FaireFrance, this farmer from Brittany has “rediscovered the pleasures of her profession” and she enjoys talking to consumers who have many questions about dairy cows, their feed, and much more.

*Ouest-France Communication for FaireFrance, published on 8 April 2022*

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## **Faireswiss fair milk no longer sold at Migros!**

*On 1 March 2022, Faireswiss Fair Milk was taken off the shelves in Migros, one of Switzerland's largest supermarket chains. This is because Migros wanted to impose the IP Suisse\* production standards on all our producers and we refused to comply. We are the ones who determine production standards, not large retailers.*

© Eric Roset, Faireswiss

Our association with Migros began with a test phase, after which we started offering our products in about 80 stores in Romandy as of April 2021. But unfortunately, this adventure was not meant to last. Sales, however, were strong: between April and December 2021, we sold about 350,000 litres of milk.

Migros’ announcement to no longer sell fair milk led to widespread media coverage and deeply moved our consumers: we have received an incredible number of support messages! For now, sales have not suffered; it looks like consumers have moved to other distribution channels. We can only hope that this will stand the test of time.

At Faireswiss, we defend the economic sustainability of producers because it is the precondition for social and environmental sustainability. Faireswiss dairy farmers already comply with a large number of requirements. We do not wish to exclude anyone and that is why we decided not to impose these standards on our producers who would be unable to adapt to them in such a short period of time.

Find us on [our website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Instagram](#)

*\*IP Suisse = milk as per IP Suisse specifications = integrated production = This programme includes different standards about regular outdoor access for cows, soy-free feed, a grass-based diet and greater biodiversity. Producers that fulfil these conditions receive an additional 5 centimes per litre of milk.*

*Berthe Darras, Faireswiss secretary*

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## Make your own yoghurt, quark and Ziger cheese from Fair Milk

© Di fair Milch, Säuliamt

*Through our cooperative "Faire Milch Säuliamt", we sell two types of pasteurised milk in the eleven branches of the VOLG chain of stores. Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to sell more dairy products via this*

*channel.*

This spring, the "Faire Milch Säuliamt" cooperative organised an information event outside six of the eleven outlets, where we demonstrated how to make your own yoghurt, Ziger cheese and quark from local Fair Milk from the Affoltern district. Customers showed a keen interest in this initiative. In addition to someone skilled in these techniques, members from the cooperative were also present to engage with customers. At the information stand, Perrine Brunold was happy to answer the many questions from interested visitors. She also offered samples of home-made yoghurt, quark and Ziger cheese – made from Fair Milk, of course. She showed how to easily make these products at home and also provided some tricks to overcome the

most common difficulties.

Our expert Perrine Brunold was a cheesemaker for many years on a shieling in the Grisons canton. She is a two-time gold medal winner at the International Mountain Cheese Olympics in Galtür (Tyrol) for her alpine cheese. Her

enthusiasm for milk products was infectious and her confections sold like hot cakes.

The strong interest from customers shows how aspects like origin and ingredients have become very important today when it comes to food. Many customers also highlighted how making their own products allows them to avoid large amounts of packaging and that this is an important factor for them.

### **About the "Faire Milch Säuliamt" project**

The Faire Milch Säuliamt cooperative is made up of 43 members and has been selling "Di fair Milch Säuliamt" pasteurised milk for almost five years through the Landi Albis (Albis Agricultural Cooperative) in the eleven VOLG stores as well as in three independent shops in the region. It offers whole milk, where fat content depends on what the cows have produced, as well as drinking milk with 2.5% fat. The price is calculated in such a way that farmers receive cost-covering prices for their milk. Sales have been steadily rising every year. This is also in part thanks to "Albis Beck", Landi Albis's bakery, which supplies these stores with baked goods. When it comes to milk as an ingredient in their baked treats, Albis Beck only uses our regional milk. In the VOLG stores, our Fair Milk accounts for 85% of the market share for pasteurised milk (more information on [www.di-fair-milch.ch](http://www.di-fair-milch.ch)).

*Werner Locher, President of the Faire Milch Säuliamt cooperative*

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## Fair Milk on social media

The "Fair Milk" projects are very active on social media, too. Would you like to know more? Here are just some highlights from our Fair Milk countries.

© Pixabay, Thomas Ulrich

### Switzerland

Meet a Faireswiss farmer

La Chocolatière and Faireswiss

### Luxembourg

Milk pallet for Ukraine

### France

Solidarity at the Agricultural Show

Let's have a look in the milking parlour

### Germany

Happy grazing after the winter

### Belgium

Fairebel is exclusively made up of farmers

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European Milk Board ASBL

Rue de la Loi 155

B-1040 Bruxelles

Tel: +32 (0)2808 1935

Fax: +32 (0)2808 8265

Mail: [office@europeanmilkboard.org](mailto:office@europeanmilkboard.org)

Document-URL: <http://www.europeanmilkboard.org/https://www.europeanmilkboard.org/english/newsletter-fair-milk-june-2022.html>