

## Dear Dairy Farmers and Interested Parties,

The new regulation on the dairy market has just been adopted. During the discussions on the Milk Package, I took part in several talks with MEPs and Paolo De Castro, the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture. We are on good terms with Mr De Castro, but unfortunately that is not enough. Although the Parliament has made significant changes, we still have a long way to go.

The compromise reached is not satisfactory in our view. However, I think there is a real chance that a monitoring agency will be set up in the future. Besides, as Mr De Castro confirmed, the Parliament intends to come up with new rules for the agricultural sector to enable market crises to be anticipated. And I believe that in this sense the work we have done with the EMB was extraordinary. We succeeded in creating the conditions required for the monitoring agency to be set up.

Moreover, the fact that the role of the Parliament was strengthened by the Treaty of Lisbon gives us hope for the future.

It is essential that the producers unite within the EMB. I believe it is our only chance. Together we must all focus on the quota reform that is being debated this year.

So my message to every milk producer is this: never give up the fight! We will succeed in the end, the important thing is to remain united... because unity is the EMB producers' strength!

*Roberto Cavaliere*  
(Member of the Board of the EMB)

## EMB Newsletter March 2012

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## Key opportunity missed! The Milk Package adopted cannot strengthen the producers' position

***The current resolution passed by the European Parliament cannot create the balance needed in the dairy market***

*Brussels/Hamm, 16.02.2012:* "It is a shaky result", is how the President of the European Milk Board (EMB), Romuald Schaber, summarises the opinion of the European milk producers on the current milk resolution in the European Parliament.

"The regulation adopted refers to contracts between producers and processors but the contracts are not to be compulsory across Europe. That shakes the common market considerably, because now producers can continue to be played off against one another. Producer organisations are to negotiate on behalf of producers, which is good, but the pooling limits of 3.5% of milk production across the EU and 33% nationally are unfortunately much too low", Schaber explains the critical details.

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## "A step in the right direction" - Interview with Marc Tarabella, MEP

***Astrid Sauvage: Mr Tarabella, thank you for granting us a few minutes to answer our questions. First of all we'd like to ask how, in your opinion, the market will develop in the next few years, given the new conditions that have been created?***

**Marc Tarabella:** I hope it will develop well in the next few years. Personally I was in favour of the old quota system. But the majority of the member states want nothing to do with it, so a system had to be found to replace it. But the agreement now reached is unsatisfactory, I feel.

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## Croatian Dairy Farmers protest over for the time being

***Since the beginning of the year a conflict was smouldering between milk producers and the Lactalis dairy Dukat in Croatia, due to low milk prices. But the crucial phase of the conflict seems to be over now.***

After the Dukat dairy's unilateral announcement of cutting the farm-gate price for milk from the previous 2.67 kuna to 2.3 kuna (about 30 cents) per kilo of raw milk, in January the milk producers of the EMB member organisation HSUPM entered into negotiations with the dairy and the Ministry of Agriculture, but the talks were stopped in mid-February without any result.

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## **India-EU free trade agreement: sacred cow or Trojan horse? – Report on Sieta van Keimpema's journey to India**

*At the invitation of the development aid organisations Misereor ([www.misereor.org](http://www.misereor.org)) and Anthra ([www.anthra.org](http://www.anthra.org)) I travelled to India for a week in February, where accompanied by Armin Paasch of Misereor I spoke with many milk producers and street dealers about the impact the planned free trade agreement between the EU and India will have on them. It is impossible to give a comprehensive report on this journey in a short article, so I can give*

*only a brief impression here.*

Whilst water-pipes were bursting in the Netherlands owing to the frost, I stepped out of the plane in Bangalore, India, on 3 February at 3 a.m. local time into 20 degrees. The first thing to greet me was a poster from the ING bank group: They have already found the way to India even without a free

trade agreement!

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## **USA: Milk production needs to be slashed**

In the USA, too, producers in the dairy market are under a great deal of pressure. The large volume of milk prevents fair prices. That is why the Milk Producers Council (MPC), an association of Californian family farms, demands that milk production be slashed.

source: wikimedia commons

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## **Switzerland: Launch of a national petition and demonstration by producers on 2 March**

roads.

The dairy market has currently reached a dead end. The volumes produced are still increasing. Every organisation seems to want to manage the crisis instead of resolving it. Nobody has any concrete proposals to enable the producers to regain control of the volumes produced or the political courage even to demand it. The producers continue to overproduce and the dairy farms continue to melt away like butter in the sun (2.5 a day). The pressure on the countryside continues unabated with dairies threatening to stop collecting milk if the volumes are not large enough or if the farm is too far from main

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## **Belgium: MIG Belgium informative meetings**

Throughout the week of 13 February, MIG organised informative debates aimed at milk producers on the subject of "Quotas end in 2015 - and then what??" We had invited two quality speakers: Paul de Montvallon, President of the French Office du Lait, and Nicolas Bezencon, of Uniterre Suisse.

Nicolas presented the Swiss situation in detail. He explained that just three years after total deregulation, prices are rock-bottom, stocks are piling up and producers have reached a dead end. He stressed the dangers of vertical and/or multiple producer organisations, and how the unity of producers was indispensable if they wanted to have a minimum of clout in negotiations. He presented the scenario that could well be replicated on the European scale.

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## EMB Calendar

Please find here some of the most important meetings of the EMB executive board in March:

- 06.03.: Meeting of the Advisory Group on Milk in Brussels
- 07.03.: Meeting of the Nyéléni-Forum for food sovereignty in Brussels
- 12.bis 13.03.: EMB members' assembly in Brussels
- 22.03.: Congress of the French dairy producers' organisation OPL in Saint Germain en Coglès (Bretagne)

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