

Dear dairy farmers, dear interested parties,

The EMB held its General Assembly on 6 and 7 October in Gembloux, Belgium, under special circumstances, after already having postponed it in April. As is the case every two years, the election of the Executive Committee was on the agenda. We bid farewell to our extremely passionate EMB President Erwin Schöpges, who had been one of the most influential members of the Executive Committee for years, as well as our committed Executive Committee member, Johannes Pfaller. Together with Kjartan Poulsen, Roberto Cavaliere, Boris Gondouin, Elmar Hannen, Pat McCormack and Guy Francq, the members entrusted me to be part of the Executive Committee for the next two years.

Where is the EMB headed for the next years? My answer: vigorously continue on the path on which we have set out. In the European context, the EMB was the first (and for a long time, the only) organisation that advocated for cost-covering milk prices and a fair income for dairy farmers as their top priority, and produced scientific studies to substantiate what can be considered a cost-covering milk price. In addition, the EMB has also created the concept of Fair Milk. While there have been many attempts to imitate the idea, no one has been able to replicate it. Simply because the EMB's Fair Milk is the only brand that has been created by producers for producers.

It took a while but we are now seeing recognition for our demands in the European Commission, the European Parliament and even in the Ministries for Agriculture in many EU member states. No one tries to refute anymore that farmers are paid very poor prices for their products – not even the retailers. We in the EMB must ensure that this recognition finds its way into the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Common Market Organisation, and that cost-covering prices become a reality!

By the same token, the European Commission is looking to promote sustainability through the Green Deal and the 'Farm to Fork' strategy. However, the proposed goals focus only on environmental sustainability. The formulation of the goals is completely lacking with respect to a key condition in achieving the envisaged sustainability: measures, goals and a date by which to ensure that these fair, cost-covering producer prices become a reality and are guaranteed.

The political process of the CAP over the last 60 years has shaped agriculture as we know it today. Hundreds of thousands of colleagues were lost along the way because the conditions laid out by political decision-makers offered them zero future prospects. In the meantime, the number of young farmers, who are absolutely essential for a generational renewal on farms and thus to ensure food security for the people of Europe (who only realised with the Covid-19 pandemic that sufficient quantities of quality food are important), has dropped to less than 5% of total farmers on the continent, which is alarming.

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Without economic and social sustainability, the EU will never reach the envisaged environmental sustainability and will lose its food security. All political circles must be aware of this. Therefore, the EMB shall contact the European Commission, MEPs and Ministers for Agriculture as often as deemed necessary in the coming months until the message hits home.

A cost-covering producer price – that remains the EMB's highest priority. That is our goal and the EMB's favourable opinion in upcoming meetings and negotiations on the CAP, Farm to Fork and the Green Deal is contingent on economic and social sustainability becoming an integral part of these policies. We know that our members – Europe's dairy farmers – support us in this goal.

Sieta van Keimpema, EMB President

Gembloux: European dairy farmers elect Sieta van Keimpema as the new President of the EMB

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At its recent General Assembly, the European Milk Board (EMB) elected former Vice-President Sieta van Keimpema from the Netherlands as its new President. Her appeal to politicians: the Green Deal cannot become a reality without respect for economic and social sustainability. Kjartan Poulsen from Denmark was chosen by the members for the post of Vice-President. In addition, current Executive Committee members Boris Gondouin from France, Pat McCormack from Ireland and Roberto Cavaliere from Italy saw their mandates renewed. The EMB also welcomed Elmar Hannen from Germany

and Guy Francq from Belgium as new members of the Executive Committee.

Outgoing President Erwin Schöpoges, who wishes to focus henceforth on the development of Fair Milk in Belgium and some African countries, was given a warm send-off by his fellow dairy farmers. They praised him for his tireless political work and tremendous involvement in the organisation of impressive demonstrations, which have contributed significantly to the development of the EMB. The Assembly also expressed its heartfelt gratitude to Johannes Pfaller from Germany, who stepped down from the Executive Committee after serving for two and a half years, for his long-standing commitment at the EMB to fight for fair trade relations and against the dumping of European surpluses in

African markets.

Incoming President Sieta van Keimpema told the EMB members at the Assembly that she believed that representing the interests of European dairy farmers before the EU institutions would continue to remain very important. "I would like to thank you for your vote of confidence", she said to the members while also looking at the upcoming priorities and challenges: "Advocating for a crisis-proof agricultural policy will be at the very top of the EMB agenda. The European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy also need to be considered from a clear producer perspective and the EMB will continue to engage actively with political decision-makers and provide constructive contributions."

From the intensive exchange on the Green Deal and the F2F strategy at this Assembly of EMB dairy farmers, it was clear that cost-covering prices and a stable income for farmers must become a real priority for EU policy-makers within their environmental strategies. "Economic and social sustainability must be given the same degree of importance as environmental sustainability," said van Keimpema. "This means that we have to create a framework where the costs of climate and environmental requirements are covered by the price and are not simply passed on to be borne by producers." Her fellow Executive Committee member Elmar Hannen added: "We have to reach a stage where the price covers what society demands. That is the only way to ensure a future for dairy farmers." According to Vice-President Kjartan Poulsen, this means that the European Commission's currently vague goal of improving the position of producers must be fleshed out and made a reality with a concrete strategy. "The EMB expects a clear indication of what steps are going to be taken to achieve this goal, so that it does not simply remain empty words."

In addition to their political work to ensure that stable producer income is treated on an equal footing, the EMB's dairy farmers also lead by example when it comes to holistic sustainability. Belgian Executive Committee member Guy Francq explains: "With the [Fair Milk project](#), we have already demonstrated in many European countries that cost-covering prices and environmental and climate protection can go hand in hand. Fair Milk also helps build bridges between producers and consumers." French Executive Committee member Boris Gondouin also believes that Fair Milk still has growth potential: "For us at the EMB, it is very important to take this project to other countries as well." He adds: "But if cost-covering prices are to become commonplace in the dairy sector as a whole, we need – as described – the appropriate political framework."

[Photos of EMB General Assembly](#)

EMB press release of 8 October 2020

EP vote on the Common Market Organisation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

The European dairy farmers welcome the adoption of new crisis instruments as a first step. "The vote on the Common Market Organisation in the European Parliament showed that many MEPs are aware that the EU agricultural sector needs effective crisis instruments", says EMB President Sieta van Keimpema from the Netherlands, summarising the opinion of the European dairy farmers' association about the European Parliament's partial decision specifically on the Common Market Organisation (CMO) within the CAP.

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The CMO defines among others the relationships between market stakeholders as well as measures to be taken in the event of crises. Late last week, MEPs voted on the European Parliament's position on the CAP reform, which will be used as a basis for trilogues with the European Commission and the Council of the European Union due to begin shortly. The new Article 219a (from amendment 149), which envisages voluntary production cuts during crises, is part of the CMO position. "Coupled with the adoption of Article 219b (from amendment 150) that foresees possible production caps during the implementation of reduction programmes, the CMO might soon have an instrument that could present an effective response to chronic crises", says EMB Vice-President Kjartan Poulsen from Denmark. At the same time, however, it is regrettable that compulsory production reduction (in amendment 277), which would be necessary to deal with far-reaching, long-lasting crises, was rejected. "The very close vote on this amendment, nonetheless, confirms that a large number of MEPs are fully aware that the instrument of temporary compulsory volume reduction is also an urgent need", explains Sieta van Keimpema. "We would like to thank these MEPs, who are clearly familiar with the dynamics of crises and the need for effective reactions."

The dairy farmers are also happy to see that the adoption of Article 218b (amendment 147) will lead to the implementation of an early-warning mechanism in the CMO. In this context, however, the EMB has indicated that a crisis situation still needs to be properly defined so that appropriate instruments are actually activated in a timely fashion.

An overview of the evaluation of dairy farmers about other articles of the CMO reform

- With respect to intervention as an instrument, the adoption of amendment 232 is a significant step forward in increased transparency.

- The newly inserted Article 172a (amendment 244) of the CMO takes on board value-sharing clauses and a consideration of production costs. Even if it is not binding, it shows that these key issues have gained the recognition they deserve among MEPs.
- Dairy farmers are well aware that market disturbances in the EU agricultural sector are a regular occurrence. With the establishment of a monitoring and management system for these disturbances (Article 222a from amendment 248), it will now be possible to deal with future crises in a more effective manner.
- In terms of contractual relationships in the dairy sector (Article 148), it is good to see that the European Parliament reiterates the need for prices in contracts to be fixed on the basis of production costs. However, as it is still left up to member states to decide whether they wish to make the use of contracts compulsory, no significant improvements for the EU dairy sector as a whole can be expected in this regard.
- Dairy farmers regret the rejection of amendment 270: the proposed increase of EU milk pooling limits in Article 149 from 3.5% to 7.5% would have been an important positive development for producer organisations. It would have allowed farmers to negotiate on an equal footing with processors, who are not subject to the low pooling limit that currently restricts producers.
- On the other hand, dairy farmers are happy to see that MEPs repeatedly mention the goal of sustainable income in their positions (amendment 3 for Recital 2 and amendment 47 for Article 1a); that imports cannot undermine EU standards (amendment 138 with respect to Article 188a) and that an observatory should be set up for the EU agricultural sector as a whole (amendment 146 for Article 218a).

MEPs have made significant strides in their position specifically on the Common Market Organisation – even if the key instrument of temporary compulsory volume reduction during crises was rejected by a small margin and the pooling limit was not increased to 7.5%. It is, therefore, even more important that the improvements the European Parliament has agreed on must be anchored in the final CMO in their entirety and should not be watered down by the other two institutions in the upcoming trilogues. “We call on the Council and the Commission to agree to these essential changes that shall be brought to the negotiating table by the European Parliament – the elected representatives of EU citizens. Fulfil your role as EU institutions and bring about a real reform that will equip the EU agricultural sector in the CMO with appropriate crisis instruments”, appeals EMB President Sieta van Keimpema.

EMB press release of 26 October 2020

Milk producers lack 15 cents per kg to cover their costs

According to the quarterly cost study conducted by the German Agricultural Sociology and Farming Office (BAL), milk production costs in Germany – with current figures of July 2020 – have continued to rise, while the average farm-gate milk price has fallen over the same period. Compared to January 2020, production costs have risen by more than 1 cent to 46.95 cents per kg in July. The milk price fell by 2 cents in the same period and was only 31.24 cents per

kg. The current results show a significant shortfall of 33%.

Elmar Hannen, milk producer in Kleve, Germany, as well as BDM and EMB Executive Committee member, summarises the situation in the German milk sector: "In the first year after the sector strategy of the German farmers' union DBV, the German dairy industry association MIV and the German cooperative federation DRV, no improvement whatsoever can be seen on the milk market. If anything, the position of producers has deteriorated. They are facing an increase in costs due to higher requirements and the drought. However, these additional costs cannot be passed on and have to be borne by the producers alone. This widens the existing shortfall even further. Without crisis instruments we will not get out of this situation and will continue losing farms." According to the German dairy farmers' association BDM, there is an urgent

need for an inter-branch organisation for the dairy sector.

Development of milk production costs in Germany

Here you have the evolution of milk production costs in Germany from 2014 to July 2020.

Price/cost ratio (shortfall)

The price/cost ratio illustrates to which extent milk prices cover the cost of production. In July 2020, producers only recovered 67% of their production costs from the milk price; the shortfall was thus 33%.

Here you see the cost shortfall since 2014:

Milk Marker Index – MMI

The Milk Marker Index (MMI) represents the evolution of milk production costs. In July 2020, the MMI was at 114, i.e. production costs for German dairy farmers had risen by 14% as compared to the base year 2015 (2015 = 100).

Here you see the evolution of the Milk Marker Index over time:

New: study on organic milk production costs

In November 2019, a study on the cost of producing organic milk in Germany was published (period: 2011 to the most recent milk year). You can find this study **here**.

Study on milk production cost in six key milk producing countries

Cost calculations are regularly carried out in Germany but also in five other countries. They as well clearly show that the prices paid to milk producers do not cover the cost of production.

The study on milk production costs in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands in 2017 is available **here**.

Chronic shortfall between production costs and milk prices – what is the solution?

The European Milk Board promotes a legally anchored crisis instrument to counteract the chronic cost shortfall. The Market Responsibility Programme (MRP) observes and reacts to market signals by aligning production.

Here you have a short description of the EMB's Market Responsibility Programme.

Background:

Commissioned by the European Milk Board and the German producer organisation MEG Milch Board, the Agricultural Sociology and Farming Office (BAL) started compiling comprehensive data on milk production costs in Germany in 2012 for the study entitled "What is the cost of producing milk?". The calculation is based on data from the EU Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) as well as the German Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), and has been updated every quarter since 2014.

Download data sheet

EMB press release of 15 October 2020

Market indicators (status: 21/10)

After price drops in the second half of the summer, the **Global Dairy Trade Index** has been on the rise again since 15 September – by 0.4% on 20 October (previously by +2.2% and 3.6% respectively). The average price for **Italian spot milk** fell in October by 1.55% to a level of 34.8 cents per kg as compared to the previous month (-22.5% as compared to October 2019).

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The **EU-27 milk price** was provisionally rising by a further 1.2% in September and is estimated at 33.4 cents per kg. The **EU butter prices** were around 345 EUR per 100 kg, which is a drop of 0.6% as compared to the previous week and a decrease of 1.6% over the last four weeks. The **EU skimmed milk powder prices** are currently 217 EUR per 100 kg, which is a stagnation (+/- 0%) as compared to the previous week, but an increase of 1.4% as compared to prices four weeks ago.

The rates for **dairy product futures** on the European Energy Exchange (EEX) showed a slight upward trend. For example, skimmed milk powder contracts for January 2021 had increased as of 21 October by 0.2% to 2,224 EUR per tonne according to a monthly comparison, while those for butter had decreased in the same period by 1% to reach 3,350 EUR per tonne.

European Milk Board

Broad farmer coalition in support of restructuring the agricultural sector

A new position paper calls for a different CAP, dairy and external trade policy. In the lead-up to the "Committee on the Future of Farming", a milk dialogue organised by the German dairy farmers' association (BDM) was able to draft a joint position paper supported by a new, broad coalition of farmers. The paper was published on 21 August and signed by the German small farmers' association (AbL), BDM, LsV, the European Milk Board (EMB), Freie Bauern, and the large producer organisations MEG Milch Board, MEG NRW and MEG Rheinland-Palatinate, as well as the recently founded Bauern und Land

Stiftung.

Jann Harro Petersen, spokesperson for the milk expert group at LsV, says: "It is important for us to form coalitions, put our differences over the last two decades behind us and define common denominators." Elizabeth Waizenegger, federal board member at the AbL, points out: "The paper clearly shows that farmers want a restructuring of agricultural and external trade policy, breaking away from cheap production strategies and towards a model that makes it possible for farms to earn a living income. The Committee on the Future of Farming must quickly agree on specific measures for an effective reform of agricultural policy that would promote climate protection, enhance biodiversity and maintain farming structures." Stefan Mann, Federal President

of BDM, comments on the process: "We are facing major political challenges, but at the same time, there is an increasing number of agricultural groups and organisations coming together as they are dissatisfied with the status quo. Our paper sends a very clear signal: we all agree on these fundamental issues."

The paper begins by laying out the following problem: "Societal demands for greater animal welfare, climate protection, biodiversity, cleaner water and air, to be achieved through regulatory measures, lead (...) to higher costs. In order to align societal demands and the challenges faced by farms, we need a market and external trade policy that breaks away from cheap production strategies and moves towards a model that makes it possible for farms to make a living, as well as a political framework that rewards additional efforts."

The demands are broken down into four points. The first demand from the farmers' coalition is a reorientation of European agricultural policy, whereby competitiveness on global markets through cheap prices is no longer a priority. Secondly, they call for an interbranch organisation for the dairy sector to effectively strengthen the market position of farmers. The third point refers to the EU agricultural policy reform, which should look at using the available funding of the Common Agricultural Policy in a targeted manner, such that farmers are specifically rewarded for better environmental and animal welfare, over and above being merely compensated for loss of income. In the fourth point, the different farmer organisations agree that EU trade policy should be formulated in such a way that local standards and cost-covering producer prices for agricultural products are not undermined by trade agreements, and our exports do not end up being detrimental to fellow farmers in other countries. It is now time to start advocating for these demands before policy-makers and the public at large.

Download the paper (in German): abl-ev.de/publikationen

Berit Thomsen, AbL advisor for international agricultural policy

Germany: strong actions in Koblenz, Committee on the Future of Farming, sector communication

“Reorientation of agricultural market policy”: the BDM and EMB made their way to Koblenz with this demand and appealed to the Ministers and officials (State Secretaries etc.) in a demonstration organised by the BDM. There were many high-impact actions like the protest procession, the demonstration involving the symbolic doling out of the soup farmers have landed in thanks to the Agriculture Ministers as well as the boat ride toward the Ministers on the Mosel. The Deutsches Eck or “German Corner” (the point where the Mosel meets the Rhine) was taken over by dairy farmers and about 20 Faironikas. In addition to the actions, there were also a number of meetings with representatives of civil society and agricultural organisations. We would sincerely like to thank everyone who made it to Koblenz and supported us.

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Committee on the Future of Farming begins its work

On 7 September, the 31 individuals invited by the Federal Chancellor’s Office to participate in the “Committee on the Future of Farming” (Zukunftskommission Landwirtschaft – ZKL) met for the first time. Our President Stefan Mann was invited to represent the BDM e.V. The launch was also attended by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, Federal Minister for Agriculture Julia Klöckner and Federal Minister for the Environment Svenja Schulze. The first point on the agenda were the rules of procedure: the work of the ZKL is envisaged to continue beyond the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2021 and a possible change in government. The first concrete results are expected by mid-2021. For the BDM, improving the economic situation in the agricultural sector while upholding environmental requirements is a top priority. This not only warrants an analysis of national agricultural policy, it also means that the ZKL must pay close attention to further developments in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and, above all else, the Common Market Organisation (CMO).

Sectoral communication – dairy farmers must pay yet again

The dairy industry associations and the German farmers’ union have decided to revive common sectoral communication. The Central Marketing Agency (CMA), which used to be responsible for this activity, was banned by a court ruling some years ago. It used to be funded by the agricultural sector through a statutory levy. The future funding is now meant to be voluntary but, once again, by dairy farmers in the form of a contribution of 15 cents per 1,000 kg of milk to be paid via the dairy industry. The BDM is against this development because effective communication about small-scale dairy farming can only be ensured by the farmers themselves. This position is also reflected in the BDM Sector Strategy 2030. Dairies have their own interests and approaches.

Farm-gate prices continue their slight upward trend

As was the case in July, some dairies will increase their farm-gate price in August by up to 1 cent per kg. However, many dairies are holding back on any possible price increases. The prices known to date range between 27.70 cents/kg (Arla Foods amba) and 36 cents/kg (Berchtesgadener Land) for 4.0% fat and 3.4% protein.

Hans Foldenauer, Bundesverband Deutscher Milchviehhalter e.V. (BDM)

Europe’s family farmers call for a rejection of the EU-Mercosur agreement

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Not just corrections, but a new orientation: we need a trade policy that ensures fair, cost-covering prices, protects the environment, and upholds human rights.

In a [joint declaration by European farmers](#), 43 farmer organisations in 14 countries – Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain (including Basque Country and Galicia) and Switzerland – as well as the umbrella organisations European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC), the European Milk Board (EMB) and Biodynamic Federation Demeter International call on their respective governments to reject the EU-Mercosur agreement.

This free trade agreement is being contested by the governments of some member states. Clear criticisms have been voiced by Austria, the Netherlands, France, Ireland and Belgium. Germany, who currently holds the EU Council Presidency, announced that it wishes to make progress on the ratification of the EU-Mercosur agreement, even though Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel has recently expressed concerns about the agreement. The fear is that Germany will accommodate the critical countries with small corrections and push them towards ratification.

European farmers call on their governments to reject the EU-Mercosur agreement. As (*editor's note: former*) EMB President Erwin Schöpges puts it:

“With the EU-Mercosur agreement, imports of products like meat, sugar and soya from the Mercosur countries are set to increase, which, in turn, will encourage them to adopt a strongly export-oriented, even more industrial production model. The Amazon rainforest, which is integral to worldwide climate protection and biodiversity, must remain safe from this system. Human rights violations are also a factor that cannot be ignored in the context of such developments. At the same time, family farms in Europe are faced with major challenges to produce foodstuffs that uphold stricter environmental and animal welfare standards, which implies higher production costs. Increased, non-equivalent imports from the Mercosur countries exert an additional price pressure on Europe’s family farms. This trade policy and these unmatched production, environmental and social standards that favour the agro-industry are simply speeding up the disappearance of small-scale farms on either side of the Atlantic.”

The farmers call for a trade policy that promotes fair, cost-covering producer prices across the world, environmental protection, biodiversity and animal welfare, human rights, small-scale farming, regional foodstuffs, the preservation and further development of European standards, and fair working conditions.

[Please find here the joint declaration by European farmers](#)

European Milk Board, September 2020

Report from Switzerland

Imagine this: butter from New Zealand is sold in Europe, packaged as Kerrygold! All you have is an indication on the back in fine print: origin NZ. That is exactly what is happening in Switzerland. In an expensive advertising campaign worth millions, the Swiss brand "DIE BUTTER" was promoted. It even received state aid, all of which was extremely successful. In fact, it is one of the best-known food brands on the Swiss market.

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Steadily shrinking milk production for years, coupled with increased consumption, has resulted in a butter shortage in Switzerland this year. However, this has not led to an increase in milk prices. Instead, 3,900 tonnes of butter were simply imported from various EU countries. The assumption within the milk interbranch organisation was that this butter would be put on the market in special packaging. But this is not what the retail sector wanted. They are simply selling this imported butter in the same packaging and under the same branding as the well-known "DIE BUTTER" brand. Farmers' organisations voiced their protest somewhat quietly, adopting a very measured tone – for fear of retaliation by buyers.

This latest example of deceit also explains why the Swiss retail sector continues to stand in the way of our GMO-free milk and meat production receiving the recognition and praise it deserves. The retailers want to hang on to Swiss brands, but the raw materials for the products being sold under these banners are to be bought as cheaply as possible. This will only change when the market operates in a framework where farmers can finally participate on an equal footing with other stakeholders.

Werner Locher, BIG-M Secretary

Irish update

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This month we focus on a proposed environmental scheme that is meant to be introduced in 2021 but might face delays due to Covid-19 funding. The final bill for the pandemic has yet to be calculated but two things are already certain: firstly, that the meter is likely to be running well into next year and, secondly, that the final bill, whenever it has to be settled, will be enormous. Many of the issues facing Irish farmers in the coming years require the Irish government and the EU to develop and implement schemes through the Common

Agricultural Policy and funded accordingly.

In the face of those massive and still rising bills, there's a distinct possibility that the government might be tempted to defer the launch of the agri-environmental schemes much anticipated in Irish farming circles. It was assumed by all in farming circles that the stated ambition to launch a new agri-environmental scheme would happen this year, probably on or around budget 2021 time (13 October). Against the background of Covid-19 and the budgetary uncertainty that entails, it is understandable if the government was to postpone that launch till its budgetary and macroeconomic ducks can be got

back in a row.

Because the first thing to say about the new agri-environmental scheme is that it is actually more important to get it done right than it is to get it done quickly. Effectively this is the Irish government's 'flagship' agricultural policy and is going to be the main policy vehicle taking Irish farming and primary food production

through the next five years of transition towards the low-emission model that we all have to get to. That is why we think that this is worth really investing in, and working through, in detail. The new scheme will have to be attractive to and, to a degree, designed around dairy farms – including family farms. The government designers have to recognise that environmental schemes that don't include or reach out to this sector are just inadequate to the ambitions that we are told need to be acted on.

In other Irish news, milk price continues to hold around 31 cents per litre at 3.6% butterfat and 3.3% protein. Milk supply has continued to increase year on year, over 3% up on 2019 levels. This is likely to stay at this level until year's end as supply falls back due to the Irish seasonal production model. Weather conditions have been kind in September boosting production after a very wet August.

Paul Smyth, ICMSA (Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association) Dairy Executive

News from Portugal

APROLEP was born, has grown and has taken action thanks to the will, commitment and dedication of a handful of milk producers who decided to do all they could for a better future. It was born from a cry of protest that would have gone unheard if it had been uttered in isolation. Our message must be clear, carefully constructed and coherent.

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APROLEP was not, is not and will never be a project that aims to gain power. It is a project that serves, organises, attempts to mobilise everyone's abilities and to have them join forces to do something constructive for the sector. We set off on this path without requesting or receiving any aid, living off the revenue from advertising in our magazine, symposiums and membership fees, but most importantly by relying on volunteers, people generously donating their time, as well as the dedication and skills of many colleagues who believed in the project and contributed to it. We are APROLEP. The strength of an association lies in its members and their contributions.

We advocate for a 'fair price', even though this sounds like a utopia when we are told that nothing can be done to regulate the market and that reducing production costs and applying for subsidies is the only way forward. We are still to achieve this goal but the entire sector as well as governmental authorities, including at European level, all agree that we must be paid a fair price that includes remuneration for our work and covers our production costs. We were quick to warn that the end of quotas would be problematic. We are in favour of origin labelling for milk and we promote the consumption of national milk and milk products, while globalisation has become the predominant view. The coronavirus arrived, borders were shut, shelves were emptied and everyone realised that local production and food sovereignty are very important.

We did not remain silent in the face of attacks from activists who want to prohibit us from rearing animals to feed society. We have shown that we care about our animals and their well-being and that we work the land in an environmentally respectful way to produce healthy and nutritious foodstuffs like milk. In spite of the pandemic, agriculture did not come to a standstill, cows did not disappear, but pollution decreased because the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions, including transport, reduced their activity.

What kind of milk production do we want for Portugal in 2030? With producers giving up milk production, we are losing economic, social and political weight. If our production sector diminishes, the viability of the dairy industry and security of supply for the population will be threatened. The next CAP cannot abandon the Portuguese milk production sector. The steady reduction in support since 2013 and one of the continuously lowest prices in Europe have led to a drastic reduction in the number of producers. The dairy sector and policy-makers at both regional and national level need to

work together to stem this drop in revenue and number of producers.

Carlos Neves, Secretary General of APROLEP

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