

Press release:

Your policy ruins dairy farmers!

Big Day of Action against the EU Milk Market Policy in the EMB member countries

Brussels (12.11.2015): Under the banner “Your policy ruins dairy farmers!” numerous protests and symbolic demonstrations were held today in the member countries of the European Milk Board: farmers took to the streets in their tractors, protest letters were handed in, warning fires lit and balloons let off.

Why are the dairy farmers taking to the streets? The milk market crisis is a burning issue and a stark threat to many farms in Europe. “Yet all the politicians can do is produce hot air!”, says Kjartan Poulsen, President of the Danish milk producer organisation LDM. “To preserve long-term milk production in the EU, though, the right solutions have to be found *now*. In a few years’ time it will be too late for many dairy farmers!”

“We call on the EU Ministers of Agriculture to discuss the European Milk Board’s Market Responsibility Programme (MRP) at their meeting in the coming week.” says Sieta van Keimpema, President of the Dutch Dairymen Board and Vice-President of the EMB. **“Cost-covering milk prices and a flexible crisis instrument are the key to a sustainable dairy industry in the EU!”**

Roberto Cavaliere, President of the APL (Italy), backs this up: “Whenever the milk price falls below production costs we need the option of a voluntary restraint on supply, as provided for in the MRP. So long as milk production carries on blithely in times of crisis, the milk price will never stabilise. The major retailers toy with us, and still pay us indecently low prices for our milk. We made people aware of that in Italy today with a big tractor demo outside supermarkets.”

Every demonstration made one thing clear: the low milk prices of recent months are no short-term market fluctuations that a healthy farm can absorb. Farm-gate prices in most EU countries are now about 10 to 20 cents below production costs (in Ireland and Northern Germany 25 cents a litre, in Lithuania just 19 cents a litre). These prices are the result of a short-sighted policy that is geared only to cheap raw materials for export instead of aspiring to sustainable solutions.

It can’t go on like this!

Dear Ministers of Agriculture, we dairy farmers call on you to take the situation seriously:

“Put the Market Responsibility Programme (MRP) into effect NOW as a crisis instrument in the milk market!”

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