Press Release

The milk volume must be cut!

Substantial agreement at extraordinary hearing of experts in the EP Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Brussels, 27.05.2016: Uncommon agreement dominated the extraordinary hearing of experts in the EU Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on Wednesday evening on the new market measures to reduce the volume of milk: the invited representatives of the producer organisations European Milk Board and Via Campesina, along with the association of co-operatives COGECA – as well as numerous representatives of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development – advocated a rapid reduction in the volume of milk on a European level.

Severe criticism was aimed at the Council and the Commission: the 500 million aid package had fizzled out completely. Instead of earmarking these funds to reduce the volume, they had pumped the money into the sector aimlessly. Simply "twiddling thumbs and hoping for a miracle" was not enough to stabilise the sector, said MEP James Nicholson. Similarly the measures adopted in March by the Council for Agriculture were manifestly unlikely to encourage the member states to implement a reduction in volumes.

Call for a European solution and financial compensation for producers

The tenor of the meeting was that a common European solution was lacking. EMB President Romuald Schaber: "We in the European Milk Board are for a voluntary restraint on supply compensating less production with 30 cents a kilo from EU funds." With such backing the measure could function on a voluntary basis and would have a swift impact. The financing was not a problem, because if the intention was to cut the volume of milk by 3%, as calculated by the EU Commission, the funds required would equate roughly to the total of the super-levy in the last two years of the quota system. Via Campesina, on the other hand, called for a compulsory reduction in volumes, but likewise stressed the necessity of financial compensation for the producers.

The lively discussion in the well-attended hearing room made it very clear that in view of the disastrous market situation no more time was to be lost, and instead the job had to be done properly at last.

European Milk Board asbl
Rue du Commerce 124, bte 4, B-1000 Bruxelles
MwSt-Nr: BE0535.674.283

Tel.: +32 (0)2 808 1935
Fax: +32 (0)2 808 8265
office@europeanmilkboard.org
www.europeanmilkboard.org

https://www.facebook.com/europeanmilkboard.en/

With all the criticism levelled at them, Joost Korte from the EU Commission and Minister Van Dam representing the Council also had to concede that now something had to be done quickly. Van Dam announced new measures for the next summit of the Ministers of Agriculture that could possibly be financed with further money from the Crisis Fund.

Adam Siekierski, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, summarised the hearing's demands: "We call on the Council and the Commission to take measures based on Article 222 to reduce volumes and back them up with funding". This he intended to present at the next plenary session and to demand from Commissioner for Agriculture Hogan.

Contacts:
EMB President Romuald Schaber (DE): +49 (0) 160 352 4703
EMB Managing Director Silvia Däberitz (DE, EN, FR): +32 (0) 2 808 1935