



Africa and Europe: Working together towards solutions!

European milk producers travel to Burkina Faso to discuss the problem of overproduction in the EU with their Burkinabe colleagues

(Brussels/Aachen, 24.5.2016). The situation in the European dairy market continues to go from bad to worse for affected farmers. The mountains of butter and milk powder keep growing. Overproduction has flooded European and international markets, causing prices for milk products to collapse, and has thus pushed farmers into a situation where their very existence is in danger. But European producers are not the only ones who are affected. This overproduction is also dangerous for many producers in West Africa because it is impossible for them to compete with cheap imports from the EU - especially those of milk powder, and this pushes them to the brink of ruin as well.

In order to work together with African milk producers towards solutions to this problematic situation, dairy farmers from the European Milk Board and representatives from Misereor and Germanwatch as also two journalists will be in Burkina Faso from May 25 to June 2. The organisation PASMEP, an initiative to support dairy cattle herders in Burkina Faso, will visit dairies and farms as well as ministries together with their guests and will also organise a workshop. This event will focus on European policy and its effect on Burkina Faso as well as technical cooperation.

European and Burkinabe farmers shall intensively discuss possible solutions that could help overcome the current situation. All participating organisations agree that overproduction in Europe and the practically uncontrolled exports to West Africa must be reined in. However, this will not be possible without an appropriate political framework - a responsibility that falls on the shoulders of both European and West-African policy-makers. Individual farmers or even farmer's organisations cannot solve such international problems alone.

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The aim is a solution that is fair for both European *and* African farmers. The EU, the Federal Government and the Länder must promote reductions in milk production volumes with financial incentives. At the same time, export regulations that do not align with the interests of farmers in West Africa should not be adopted. It is also necessary to further develop short-term measures that help prevent crises in Europe and to implement a change in strategy – focusing on increased quality rather than export promotion.

A visit by African farmers to Germany in 2014 already showed that such encounters with colleagues from other continents lead to a substantial increase in knowledge and understanding for both parties. During the visit, producers from Burkina Faso visited farms in the Eifel and Allgäu regions and were able to understand the local situation and production. The conclusion was clear: Be it African or European producers - dairy farmers on both continents face similar problems with respect to a number of aspects. All the participating organisations therefore agree that it is useful to continue to work together, rather than against each other, in the future as well.

Would you like further information about the project trip from May 25 to June 2 2016 to Burkina Faso?

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