



United for a responsible dairy policy!

Urgent appeal by European and African producers to policy-makers

(Ouagadougou/Brussels/Aachen, 1 June 2016) In a joint statement on Tuesday, European and African farmers appealed to policy-makers on both continents to advocate for fair and responsible solutions to the milk market crisis. "EU policy-makers must create a crisis instrument that addresses production volume and is binding for all Member States of the European Union," states an appeal by the European Milk Board, the European umbrella organisation for milk producers, which has also been signed by the Initiative to Support Dairy Cattle Herders in Burkina Faso (PASMEP), the National Association of Small Dairies in Burkina Faso (UMPL/B), as well as development cooperation organisations MISEREOR and Germanwatch.

The appeal goes on to state: "Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and West Africa should not be concluded at this point because they would negatively affect our West-African partners, especially their local structures."

In addition to UN World Milk Day on June 1, this statement coincides with an ongoing visit by European dairy farmers to Burkina Faso, accompanied by MISEREOR and Germanwatch. This trip is an opportunity for all participants to get to know the conditions under which milk is produced in Africa.

Burkina Faso: "We can provide for ourselves"

Marianna Diallo, a dairy farmer from Tambolo - a small village about 170 kilometres from the Burkinabe capital Ouagadougou, explains to the visitors: "We can provide enough milk for ourselves. We have built a small dairy where we produce milk and yogurt." Farmers from Tambolo also cultivate soy, broad beans and maize, among other crops. The income from the sale of milk is used to feed their families and pay for their children's education. One third of the population of Burkina Faso raises cattle. However, the major import of milk powder from Europe is increasingly putting their livelihood in danger because the EU products are on an average half the price of local milk products.

Farmers on both continents are struggling

The signatories to the mentioned appeal urgently call on Germany and Europe to put a stop to the large-scale overproduction of milk in the EU as this exerts downward pressure on prices worldwide and continues to erode away at the livelihood of farmers. "Milk producers in Europe and Africa are struggling because of current policies," critiques Wilhelm Thees, rural development expert at MISEREOR. "In Burkina Faso, it is the women who produce milk. When this source of income is destroyed, a whole social structure collapses as the women have no alternative and thus no income." Johannes Pfaller, a milk producer from southern Germany and a representative of the European

Milk Board on the visit to Burkina Faso, says: "We cannot displace our home-grown problems to Africa. Those who hamper the development of other countries, compromise their own development as well." Christoph Lutze, a dairy farmer from northern Germany, adds: "In my time in Africa, it has become clear to me that our export-oriented policy is very dangerous for the milk producers here."

Practical project on the ground

Belgian EMB member organisation MIG has already been active in Burkina Faso for a number of years. Currently, the Belgian dairy farmers, together with Oxfam, are supporting a micro-dairy in Ouahigouya. Belgian and African milk producers are also working together to create a fair label for milk from Burkina Faso. "Fairefaso" is aiming to position itself as a sign of quality on the market - as a symbol for fair milk prices for producers.

Detailed visit report by Erwin Schöpges (in German, French and Dutch):

<http://bit.ly/1RM3fc9>

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