

17.06.2026

20 Years of the European Milk Board A Strong Voice for Milk Producers in Europe

EMB celebrates anniversary in Italy - dairy sector once again under heavy pressure

Brussels / Montichiari – This year, the European Milk Board (EMB) celebrates its 20th anniversary. During the General Assembly in Italy, milk producers from numerous European countries are coming together to look back on two decades of commitment to fair conditions in the dairy sector.

Since its foundation, the EMB has established itself as an independent and strong voice for milk producers in Europe. What began 20 years ago as a courageous initiative by dairy farmers has today become an important political force at European level. “20 years of EMB show that producers can achieve real change when they stand together. Many important issues that are discussed at European level today would never have progressed this far without the pressure and work of the EMB,” explains EMB President Kjartan Poulsen.

Numerous political achievements

Over the past two decades, the EMB has actively helped shape numerous developments and political debates. These include in particular:

- the Europe-wide milk strikes and protest actions in 2008 and 2009,
- greater visibility of the situation of milk producers in Brussels,
- the introduction of the European Milk Market Observatory,
- the establishment of scientific production cost calculations,
- the implementation of voluntary supply reduction as a crisis instrument,
- progress in producer pooling and collective bargaining
- mandatory contracts in the dairy sector
- as well as the continuous work against unfair trading practices (UTPs).

The “Fair Milk” project is also regarded as an important signal for fair market conditions and demonstrates that better recognition and appreciation of producers is no longer impossible. “Fair Milk has shown that consumers are willing to support fair agriculture and that fair prices on the market are possible,” emphasises EMB Vice-President Boris Gondouin.

The various Fair Milk projects across Europe are now considered outstanding examples of producers’ own initiative, innovation and solidarity. They combine high-quality regional products with fair remuneration for producers while at the same time creating a direct connection between agriculture and consumers. For the EMB, the Fair Milk projects send a strong positive signal that farming can develop modern and successful future-oriented models even in difficult times.

Difficult current situation in the dairy sector

Despite the anniversary celebrations, the European dairy sector is once again under severe pressure. Rising milk volumes worldwide, falling prices and high production costs are causing major economic problems for farms in many countries. The EMB is therefore warning of a further collapse in prices and is once again calling for the activation of voluntary supply reduction at European level. “The current situation once again shows that Europe needs functioning market instruments. Voluntary supply reduction is not a theoretical concept, but a necessary instrument for stabilising the milk market in times of crisis,” says Kjartan Poulsen. The EMB criticises the fact that important Member States and parts of the European Commission continue to hesitate to activate appropriate measures.

EMB remains an essential voice for producers

From the EMB’s point of view, an independent representation of milk producers at European level remains more important than ever. The challenges facing agriculture are increasing: volatile markets, rising production costs, high investment

pressure and a lack of planning security. “Anyone who wants food security and a future for young farmers must also create economically viable conditions for milk producers,” explains Boris Gondouin. The EMB therefore intends to continue fighting in the future for fair prices and stable market conditions.

“The past 20 years have not been easy – but they have shown that commitment, solidarity and European cooperation can bring about change,” concludes Kjartan Poulsen. “A sincere thank you goes to all the fighters and companions who have invested so much energy and work into the EMB over these 20 years, making it possible to achieve so much together. In this context, we would also like to warmly thank the former presidents Romuald Schaber, Erwin Schöpges and Sieta van Keimpema. We are particularly pleased that they are also present at the 20th anniversary celebration in Italy.”

Many thanks to founding and host country Italy

The EMB would also like to warmly thank the Italian hosts from APL for organising the anniversary event and for their great hospitality. The General Assembly and the celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of the EMB provide an important framework for exchange, European solidarity and shared perspectives for the future of the dairy sector. “It is something very special to celebrate this anniversary together with so many milk producers from across Europe in Italy, the founding country of the EMB. Our thanks go to all organisers and participants on site,” explains Kjartan Poulsen.

[<<< back](#)