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98.9% of EU milk volume reduction already claimed

Clear sign from European milk producers in favour of production cuts

(Brussels, 28.09.2016) The figures published by the European Commission yesterday on aid applications for volume reduction clearly represent the large-scale interest in the compensation for production cuts offered by the EU. In the first application period, over 52,000 farmers have participated and almost 99% of the available EU allocation of 150 million euros has already been claimed.

European milk producers have thus clearly spoken in favour of volume reduction. The excessive milk volume supplied in recent months has supressed milk prices across Europe and has put numerous milk producers out of business. "The high participation in the EU volume reduction programme shows that Europe's milk producers want to address the production-related issues," says Romuald Schaber, President of the European Milk Board. This is in clear contradiction to statements from agricultural experts, sections of the European Commission, farmer's associations and the processing industry, who claim that milk producers *want* to keep on increasing production and that a targeted reduction in supply is not possible.

Even in major milk-producing countries like Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Belgium, participation in the volume reduction programme has been substantial. "There can be no clearer sign that we need to step on the brakes", continues Schaber. "Volume reduction is a first step in the right direction. It is unfortunate that this measure was introduced so late and that production volumes across Europe will not be capped in parallel. Funding must also be made available for the second reduction period, in order to ensure further volume reduction."

To avoid such hard-hitting dairy crises in the future, a Market Responsibility Programme, like the one proposed by the EMB, must be put in place. This would allow milk producers to take early preventive action against market fluctuations in the future.

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