

News Details

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A milk price of 50 cents/l - indispensable to ensure that farmers are remunerated for their work



(Paris, 1 March 2022) As the trading negotiations between suppliers and their clients come to a close today, the outcome is not in line with farmers' expectations. The announced prices are well below the production costs borne by farmers; the EGALim law has proven to be ineffective yet again! The dairy industry and distributors, however, boast a significant increase in milk price, while conveniently leaving out the fact that operating costs have skyrocketed for over a year, and farmers bear the direct brunt of this trend. According to the dairy interbranch organisation for western France (CILOUEST), the increased costs would require a price increase of 3.35 cents/l as compared to October 2020

Faced with this reality, the European Milk Board (EMB) and its two French member organisations – *Association des Producteurs de Lait Indépendants* (APLI) and *Coordination Rurale* (CR) – demand a milk price of 50 cents/l as the absolute minimum to allow producers in France to cover all costs and draw a decent remuneration. And also for the colleagues in other EU countries, who are in a similarly difficult situation, the prices must finally move to a cost-covering level.

Dairy farming in France in swift decline

For many years now, the European Milk Board and its member organisations have been sounding the alarm regarding the situation of dairy farming in Europe and more specifically in France. Things in France are especially dire: The number of dairy farms keeps reducing and according to the agricultural census, one-fourth of dairy farmers have stopped their operations over the last ten years. At the same time, the herd size is also shrinking rapidly: France lost 8.2% of its dairy cows between 2015 and 2020, and about 441,000 heads could disappear by 2030 according to IDELE. The unattractiveness of the sector and the ageing dairy farmer population are bad signs for the future of the sector.

Revaluing the milk price would encourage the youth to join the sector

With a work week spanning between 44 and 58 hours, and in spite of their status as business owners, most dairy farmers have a hard time making a decent living. According to the latest study by the EMB, the average income of French dairy farmers between 2015 and 2019 was 1.24 euros/hour, while a fair income in France was an average 26.66 euros/hour. It is difficult to make dairy farming attractive to the youth given these conditions. It is also important to remember that only one in three dairy farms is taken up by the next generation and the number of young farmers entering the sector has halved since the late 1990's.

It is high time to bring decent remuneration to farms and to ensure the survival of our production – a milk price of 50 cents/l is the only way. The future of French dairy farming is at stake!

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