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EMB congratulates Belgium's Fairebel on its 15-year anniversary

"Farmers have created something special that is pioneering beyond the agricultural sector and above all, offers a good return for everyone"

The Belgian *Fairebel* celebrates its 15-year anniversary this year. What began as an ambitious project is now a well-established success – thanks to the strong commitment of the participating farmers.

"We would like to congratulate Belgian farmers on this milestone. For 15 years now, consumers in Belgium have been able to buy fair products and offer direct support to farmers. This is a long, but essential journey that producers have embarked on and a path that they continue to tread. Bravo," says EMB President Kjartan Poulsen.

Fair prices are not the norm in European agriculture; unfortunately, this remains an exception. And it seems that the only way to achieve this is for farmers to invest a significant amount of energy and passion in a project. "For 15 years now, Fairebel's farmers have been striving and have created something exceptional in their country that is pioneering beyond the agricultural sector and above all, offers a good return for everyone," adds EMB Executive Committee member Boris Gondouin. It is clear to see that Fairebel has made a social contribution as well. In addition to the very important aspect of fair prices for producers, the direct relationship between consumers and farmers also plays a big role. On one hand, you have the fair products, and on the other, you also have the Faircoop cooperative that brings together 500 producers and 1800 consumers. "At a time when the distance between producers and consumers is constantly increasing, Fairebel is setting an important example and is making a meaningful contribution to strengthening social cohesion," underlines EMB President Kjartan Poulsen.

Like the Fair Milk projects that have been set up by farmers in France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland, the Belgian project is also fully owned by farmers. This ensures that the philosophy of the project remains strong even after a decade and a half, and has not been watered down by other interests.

With shouldering social responsibility for producers and consumers, Fair Milk producers are paying it forward for the entire sector. "The commitment to fair trade, to fair cooperation, is exemplary and should serve as inspiration for policy-makers in the EU to, at long last, create the appropriate conditions for all producers," explains Boris Gondouin. "There is good news: It is clear that fair prices are possible on the market." And the committed Fair Milk producers have been proving just that for the last 15 years.

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