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EMB General Assembly warns of imminent milk crisis

Producers call for EU-wide activation of voluntary production reduction

Dairy farmers from across Europe came together this week for the European Milk Board (EMB) General Assembly in Brussels. The high attendance clearly shows that the situation on the dairy market is dire – and coordination across borders is more important than ever before.

Milk crisis imminent - significant price collapses in several countries

A key topic at the Assembly was the worsening situation on the dairy market. Significant drops in producer prices are being reported in several European countries. This means that many farms are, once again, on the brink of going out of business. In light of this development, the representatives called for the immediate activation of voluntary production reductions at EU level. This crisis instrument was created to take early action and reign in overproduction and price drops. “The EU must take action now in order to prevent a massive collapse in milk price,” says the EMB.

Fair Milk initiatives as an anchor of stability for producers

The Assembly also highlighted the importance of Fair Milk projects in Europe. These initiatives spearheaded by farmers themselves show that fair prices, transparency and respect are possible across the entire value chain. They not only lead to better incomes but also strengthen self-marketing and consumer trust. Especially against the backdrop of a looming crisis, these projects stand as clear evidence that functioning alternatives to the current market model exist – and that political action is indispensable in creating a fairer dairy sector.

Contracts must strengthen the position of farmers - no exceptions

Another important discussion point: The latest reform of the Common Market Organisation, where trilogues between the EU Institutions are still ongoing and where one can hope for a positive outcome. In this context, obligatory, effective milk delivery contracts carry enormous significance. The EMB Executive Committee underlined that real, compulsory contracts are the only way to strengthen the position of farmers in the supply chain. This includes:

- Prohibiting farm-gate prices that are below production costs – based on accurate, transparent calculations.
- Obligatory inclusion of delivery volumes in contracts to create planning certainty and fair conditions.
- Cooperatives must not be exempt from this requirement. The EMB sees an urgent need for action on this front. At the end of the day, cooperatives must be subject to the same rules as the rest of the sector.

Mirror clauses are essential

EMB representatives at the Assembly also reiterated their call for mirror clauses in agricultural trade. If European farmers must comply with strict standards, imported products must also be subject to the same rules – and the EU must monitor this effectively. Only then can fair competition prevail.

The General Assembly impressively showcased the importance of a strong European network in the agricultural sector. Discussions among national organisations, shared analyses and common demands make the EMB a key stakeholder advocating for future-proof European agricultural policy.