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25.02.2026

EMB Presidents Issue Strong Warning at SIA Over Impending Milk Crisis

Without a Voluntary Volume Reduction, There Is No Way Forward!

At the Salon International de l'Agriculture (SIA) in Paris, EMB President Kjartan Poulsen and EMB Vice-President Boris Gondouin issued a strong warning about the dramatic escalation of the situation on the European milk market. Many farms are once again operating far below cost coverage and are increasingly facing an existential threat. This is not a sustainable model for Europe's milk production.

In the European Parliament, constructive Members of Parliament are taking a realistic view of the situation and, during yesterday's meeting of the Committee on Agriculture, ensured that the issue will be placed on the agenda of one of the upcoming sessions. This means that the European Commission will also be confronted with this very important matter from the parliamentary side, as it will be required to report on the milk market situation and respond to Parliament. For producers, what matters most is that this leads to concrete action by the Commission: the activation of the voluntary volume reduction scheme!

Dramatic market situation – action is needed now!

The structural situation remains highly problematic:

- Global milk volumes are at excessively high levels, and producer prices are reacting with a sharp downward trend, while production costs remain high.
- Price pressure from international competition is further aggravating the situation.

The EMB therefore calls for the immediate activation of the voluntary volume reduction scheme at EU level as a central crisis instrument. The voluntary volume reduction has already demonstrated in a previous crisis that:

- production volumes can be reduced quickly with a direct and effective impact on the market;
- price pressure can be eased, giving farms economic breathing space;
- market stability can be restored more rapidly than through passive crisis management.

"The market must not remain trapped in overproduction," said the EMB President. "A temporarily and responsibly managed supply framework is not an intervention against the market – it is a prerequisite for markets to function properly."

Fair Milk: Responsibility & Fair Prices

In addition to the crisis analysis, the topic of Fair Milk was also at the center of discussions at the SIA. At the FaireFrancestand, the EMB presented itself together with its French partners. The FaireFrance project impressively demonstrates how value added can be distributed more fairly. "Fair Milk is not a marketing tool – it is a model for long-term viability," explained EMB Vice-President Boris Gondouin.

The commitment of the French colleagues was expressly acknowledged by the EMB. "What has been built here, and also through the outstanding Fair Milk projects in other countries, is exemplary for Europe," said Kjartan Poulsen. "FaireFrance and the Fair Milk colleagues from Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and Switzerland show how farms can regain influence through initiative and solidarity."

The EMB's message at the SIA is clear: Europe needs an active market policy and effective crisis instruments – now! Europe needs its farmers and the Fair Milk project. Europe needs fair prices: for producers, for a reliable food supply, and for consumers.

Background: What is the voluntary volume reduction?

The voluntary volume reduction is a crisis-management instrument within the EU's Common Market Organisation for agricultural products. Dairy farmers voluntarily and temporarily reduce their milk deliveries and receive a compensation payment in return. The aim is to quickly reduce overproduction, stop price pressure and stabilise producer prices – without coercion and without permanent production cuts. Following its application in 2016/2017, this instrument proved to be effective and delivered rapid price stabilisation.

Unlike public intervention or private storage, the voluntary volume reduction directly addresses the root cause of the crisis: overproduction. Excess milk is not produced in the first place, avoiding costly stocks, later dumping sales and renewed price pressure. Markets stabilise more quickly, public costs remain lower and farmers retain their entrepreneurial responsibility. The voluntary volume reduction is inspired by the Market Responsibility Programme (MRP) of the EMB.

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