

News Details

News Details

20.02.2025

EMB on the European Commission's vision:

European Commission has identified the issues - EMB calls for ambitious implementation and real solutions for farmers!

The European Milk Board (EMB) welcomes parts of the Vision for Agriculture and Food presented by the European Commission, which identifies many of the main challenges. "It is especially positive that it states the objective of an agricultural sector with quality foodstuffs and fair working and living conditions," says EMB President Kjartan Poulsen. He adds that this must now be accompanied by ambitious implementation to offer real solutions for farmers who are in a fragile position in the value chain. However, this also means that the current orientation towards exports and deregulation must be significantly reduced, and it must make way for a strategy that gives due consideration to internal production and EU producers.

Challenges in the agricultural sector

The European Commission accurately highlights different structural problems and possible solutions, such as:

- **Farmer income:** *The income of farmers remains significantly below the average in other economic sectors. When formulating measures to achieve fair living standards, all sources of income, including earnings on the market, must be taken into account. Farmers must have a better income from the market so that they can make the necessary investments on their farms. This means that the current imbalances in the food chain must be evened out, as producers face the greatest disadvantage. Practices where farmers are systematically forced to sell below costs will not be tolerated.*
- **Import standards:** *To ensure a fair, sustainable context for competition, the Commission is working towards greater alignment of production standards for imported products, especially when it comes to pesticide use and animal welfare. The Commission will ensure that relevant food safety guidelines are appropriately implemented and enforced by setting up a special task force for increased import controls.*

EMB calls for decisive implementation!

As EMB President Kjartan Poulsen underlines, the EMB recognises that the European Commission's vision addresses some important points. However, these aspects cannot exist in a vacuum and must be accompanied by specific measures and reforms.

Ensuring fair income for farmers

- **Prohibiting prices below production costs:** There must be specific measures to ensure that farmers are not forced to sell their products at prices that do not cover their production costs. It is important to note that production costs must consider real production costs, which includes appropriate remuneration of producers and the cost of additional services. The EMB calls for this practice to be placed on the UTP Directive blacklist. In fact, the EMB has drafted [a legislative text](#) that stipulates compulsory price setting that is higher than production costs within a comprehensive framework.
- **Compulsory contracts with fair conditions:**
 - The compulsory contracts between farmers and producers, which were proposed by the European Commission in late 2024 as part of the reform of the Common Market Organisation, must include a clause that guarantees prices higher than production costs.
 - Cooperatives and their members should no longer be exempt from the binding contract rules.

Securing the economic viability of sustainable farming

- **Environmental efforts must be worth it:** Environmental services provided by farmers must be appropriately remunerated by the market so that their costs will finally be compensated including an appropriate profit margin.
- **Imports should not undermine efforts:** EU standards should not be watered down by imports. Mirror clauses must be consequently introduced and enforced, and agricultural products should not be included in free trade agreements. The Commission needs to be much more ambitious on this front. They must significantly reign in the current export orientation to stabilise internal production and do right by EU farmers.

Improving crisis management

The EMB's [crisis instrument](#) is an effective tool that creates incentives for balanced production and counteracts price collapses. This must be integrated in the Common Market Organisation (CMO) within the framework of the Milk Market Observatory to ensure long-term crisis management.

Strengthening transparency in the food chain

The Agrifood Chain Observatory (AFCO) must contribute actively to cost transparency in the food chain. Methodologies like the [BAL cost calculation](#) should be used to draw up realistic production cost data that serves as the basis for fair prices.

Conclusion

The European Commission's vision is an important starting point. However, we need more ambitious measures to create an agricultural sector that is fair, sustainable and future proof. "As the EMB, we are ready to contribute with concrete proposals for implementation," says Kjartan Poulsen. "The EU needs us farmers - but it is only with the right conditions that we can sustainably continue to supply our citizens with sufficient, high-quality foodstuffs."

<<< back