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European delivery boycott still going strong - protests of farmers increase

Politicians in many European capital cities are reacting to pressure from dairy farmers. The European Milk Board (EMB) demands decisions to change European system

Brussels/Hamm, 24.09.2009: "Also after striking for 13 days, the European dairy farmers will continue the delivery boycott", says Pascal Massol, President of the French milk producers' organisation APLI after today's EMB-conference in Brussels. "Altogether 500 million litres of milk have not been delivered to the dairies during the strike, which started the 10th September in France. The French farmers have not delivered 250 million litres of that amount.", says Daniel Condat, President of the French OPL.

"Today and on Friday in Galicia dairy farmers participate on the delivery stop for the first time", announces Sieta van Keimpema, Vice president of the EMB. Romuald Schaber, President of the European Milk Board adds "The readiness to combat of the dairy farmers is still very strong. In the up coming weeks several actions of protest are planned. Already tomorrow, Thursday 24th September, dairy farmers are organising together very strong actions in many European countries. The media and the consumers are on our side." And Massol says: "We call on representatives of the other farm sectors and veterinarians and organisations of the civil society to support the protests."

"The milk market has reacted positively and is showing the first signs of price rises. On the spot market it is obvious. Also some dairies have started to increase the producer price", says Erwin Schöpges, President of the Belgian milk producers' lobby group (MIG).

"The pressure exerted by the dairy farmers' revolt in Europe has caused politicians in many European capital cities to get into gear", says Thomas Schmidthaler, Member of the EMB organisation IG-Milch from Austria. Romuald Schaber adds "Several talks have been held with ministers and government representatives in France, Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg and Italy, and commitments made in the interest of the European dairy farmers. There have also been initial meetings with high-ranking representatives of the European Commission, and the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso has let it be known that he is aware of the seriousness of the situation and will bend the Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel's ear. "We demand immediate talks with Barroso", says Romuald Schaber. "The EMB is the organisation the politicians have to negotiate with."

Pascal Massol makes it clear: "We are definitely against dairy contracting, which would mean that farmers will be the slaves of the industry. We have started this Europe wide delivery stop and the protests of the farmers in order to push a change of system of the dairy market policies going towards a flexible volume regulation with participation of the EMB. First signals from the politicians are not enough", so Pascal Massol. "Our goal is to have real political decisions."

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