

News Details

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European Milk Strike: Barroso must defuse situation - actions of dairy producers throughout Europe

**Milk delivery stop
in Europe**

**participating
countries**



Press release

Farmers in eight countries are taking direct action and have stopped supplying milk. Forceful decisions are demanded from the President of the European Commission

Brussels/Hamm 21.09.2009: Dairy farmers in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Luxemburg, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands have called a joint day of action today. "Everywhere there are countless protest activities and more and more milk supply boycotts. Reacting to the low milk prices, the farmers are demanding that the excessive volume of milk be reduced forthwith. Until the politicians do something, the milk producers are removing their milk from the market on their own initiative as a self-help measure", says Pascal Massol of APLI, the French organisation of independent milk producers.

As part of the European day of protests, a delegation of dairy farmers from the European Milk Board (EMB) has organised an impressive action in Brussels with milk and fire in front of the building of the EU-Commission. At the same time they handed Jean-Claude Thibault, deputy of the president of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, the political demands of the EMB for a way out of the milk crisis. "Barroso keeps an eye on the protests of the dairy farmers. He knows it is a very serious situation and he will influence agricultural Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel concerning the topic", said Thibault. And Romuald Schaber, president of the EMB, said: "It is very important to react fast. If not it will lead into a catastrophe. The dairy farmers' revolt in Europe is growing by the day." Erwin Schoepges from the Belgium EMB-organisation MIG, Anne Marc from the French OPL, Joffrey Serey of the French APLI and Xavier Delwarte from the Belgium organisation La Fugea were also part of the EMB delegation.

"By operating an increase in volumes in an oversaturated market, the European Agricultural Policy has failed and driven the milk producers into this desperate situation", says Erwin Schöpges of the milk producers lobby (MIG) in Belgium. "Tens of thousands are on the verge of ruin." The European Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel is not fit for the role and has failed. And it is not only dairy farmers that are suffering as a result, but also environmentally friendly high-quality milk production and jobs upstream and downstream. Internationally this kind of policy is jeopardizing and even destroying local milk structures in poor countries.

"In short", says Schaber, "no social peace can be guaranteed with these political acts and the consequences we all know. Because the impact is so widespread we feel it is necessary to call on the very top of the Commission to take immediate action and so defuse the situation quickly."

The European farmers have come up with measures that can counter the catastrophic situation effectively and create basic conditions for sustainable, healthy milk production in Europe. In a nutshell, the volume of milk being produced has to be geared to demand. This will balance out supply and demand and enable the milk producers to achieve cost-covering prices

in the market.

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