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Fair, Fairer, Faironika

The symbolic Faironika cow has accompanied EMB farmers in their fight for fair milk prices over the last 15 years

(Ettelbruck, 4 July 2022) At the milk strike or while spraying milk in front of the European Parliament in Brussels, on World Milk Day alongside Manneken Pis or at the innumerable Fair Milk tastings in or outside supermarkets, at Europe-wide protests, agricultural fairs and press conferences or in many, many fields at the heart of Europe: Faironika, the EMB's symbolic cow in different national colours has stood with farmers for 15 years and embodies their call for fair milk prices.

For the European Milk Board (EMB), this is a special milestone that deserves to be celebrated. EMB President Sieta van Keimpema believes that the mascot – also known as Justine or Onestina in different languages – is a friendly yet fiery fellow combatant with high impact. “15 years of Faironika – 15 years as THE symbol for fair milk. Farmers, consumers and policy-makers across Europe and, to some extent, in Africa as well recognise her and know what she stands for. This has been made possible thanks to the great work by EMB members and the successful Fair Milk projects.” Boris Gondouin, EMB Board member from France says that in this way, Faironika is also a symbol of mutual trust and solidarity: “Through Faironika, farmers show that they are united with their fellow milk producers in Europe and Africa and highlight the importance of a fair agricultural policy for farmers and citizens alike.”

Guy Diderrich from EMB member organisation LDB, who are the organisers of this year's birthday celebration in Luxembourg and have prepared a big cake as a birthday surprise for Faironika, looks back proudly over the past years, at the fighting spirit of his colleagues and the tireless commitment of this symbolic cow: “For 15 years now, Faironika has always been there at the effective, creative actions by farmers and she will continue to be by our side during our intensive discussions, efforts and campaigns for a fair milk price. We farmers from across Europe, together with our colleagues from Africa, know that we must make our voices heard so that fair income for farmers and a stable food production system become a reality.”

Come rain or shine, in the north, south, east or west of Europe or even in Africa: Faironika, Justine and Onestina in their respective country colours or in the EU blue will stand at the forefront of all future actions and will continue to support dairy farmers in their struggle for fair milk prices that will ensure a decent income in the agricultural sector.

Farmers wish Faironika, Justine and Onestina “Happy Birthday”

Carlos Neves, APROLEP, Portugal:

The cow Faironika is for us the symbol of the unity of European dairy farmers with EMB in our peaceful, but firm fight for a fair milk price and a better life for all farmers from here in western Europe via Luxembourg to eastern countries, without forgetting Ukraine. Together, we are strong!

Markus Hafner, South Tirol/ Italy:

Best wishes from South Tirol to Faironika and all our friends across Europe. Cheers to you!

Paul Smyth, ICMSA, Ireland:

We dairy farmers love Faironika because it represents a fair milk price across Europe for all dairy farmers. In Ireland, we believe in a fair milk price, which contributes to the sustainability of our family farms.

Boris Gondouin and Jean-Luc Pruvot, APLI and FaireFrance, France:

It is plain to see that we love Justine – after all, she is wherever we are. She symbolises our political fight for cost-covering prices in Europe. But she is also the mascot of our FaireFrance brand and that is really important.

Justine has been our mascot for 15 years now – we were, in fact, the pioneers of Justine.

She takes us on amazing adventures and as Muhammad Ali said: "It isn't the mountains ahead to climb that wear you out; it's the pebble in your shoe." It is thanks to Justine and the energy of everyone we met along the way that we were able to launch our brand in France.

It is a true pleasure to celebrate this milestone today. Happy Birthday!

Elmar Hannen, BDM, Germany:

Hello dear friends – it is time to celebrate Faironika's birthday. She is synonymous with all these years of political struggle as well as our efforts with other stakeholders along the value chain for fair treatment. And we will continue this fight till we reach our goal.

Anne Chenevard, Faireswiss, Switzerland:

On her many travels with Faireswiss, Justine ended up with 3 chipped legs and a damaged horn. But Justine is a bit like us, she never gives up. She might be brought down to one knee, but never to both. She gets back up and doesn't lose hope. Justine will never give up and she believes in the future of fair milk.

Henning Haschenburger, Karolina Klaus-Althaus, Peter Habbena and Karsten Hansen, BDM, Germany

Faironika, our symbolic cow, is at all our demonstrations, where she is noticed and showcased by the press. She is a sign of farmers fighting to defend their rights.

For me, Faironika stands for our long-standing struggle, for change and for remunerative prices in the agricultural sector. I am proud to have a Faironika on our farm.

Faironika – a love affair that dates back to 2015. The images from demonstrations in Brussels were simply fascinating and seeing this community with all these cows in their different national and European colours really sealed the deal for me.

Faironika – she is not just a German project, but a European one.

Together, we fight for a fair milk price and the value of milk in Europe.

Kjartan Poulsen, LDM, Denmark:

Dear Faironika, it is good to have you with us. It is a symbol of our struggle for fair income for farmers. Thank you!

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