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Gembloux: European dairy farmers elect Sieta van Keimpema as the new President of the EMB



The new EMB Executive Committee (+ Roberto Cavaliere and Pat McCormack)

EMB: The Green Deal cannot become a reality without respect for economic and social sustainability

At its recent General Assembly, the European Milk Board (EMB) elected current Vice-President Sieta van Keimpema from the Netherlands as its new President. Kjartan Poulsen from Denmark was chosen by the members for the post of Vice-President. In addition, current Executive Committee members Boris Gondouin from France, Pat McCormack from Ireland and Roberto Cavaliere from Italy saw their mandates renewed. The EMB also welcomed Elmar Hannen from Germany and Guy Francq from Belgium as new members of the Executive Committee.

Outgoing President Erwin Schöpges, who wishes to focus henceforth on the development of Fair Milk in Belgium and some African countries, was given a warm send-off by his fellow dairy farmers. They praised him for his tireless political work and tremendous involvement in the organisation of impressive demonstrations, which have contributed significantly to the growth of the EMB. The Assembly also expressed its heartfelt gratitude to Johannes Pfaller from Germany, who stepped down from the Executive Committee after serving for two and a half years, for his long-standing commitment at the EMB to fight for fair trade relations and against the dumping of European surpluses in African markets.

Incoming President Sieta van Keimpema told the EMB members at the Assembly that she believed that representing the interests of European dairy farmers before the EU Institutions would continue to remain very important. "I would like to thank you for your vote of confidence," she said to the members while also looking at the upcoming priorities and challenges: "Advocating for a crisis-proof agricultural policy will be at the very top of the EMB agenda. The European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy also need to be considered from a clear producer perspective and the EMB will continue to engage actively with political decision-makers and provide constructive contributions."

From the intensive exchange on the Green Deal and the F2F Strategy at this Assembly of EMB dairy farmers, it was clear that cost-covering prices and a stable income for farmers must become a real priority for EU policy-makers within their environmental strategies. "Economic and social sustainability must be given the same degree of importance as environmental sustainability," said van Keimpema. "This means that we have to create a framework where the costs of climate and environmental requirements are covered by the price and are not simply passed on to be borne by producers." Her fellow Executive Committee member Elmar Hannen added: "We have to reach a stage where the price covers what society demands. That is the only way to ensure a future for dairy farmers." According to Vice-President Kjartan Poulsen, this means that the European Commission's currently vague goal of improving the position of producers must be fleshed out and made a reality with a concrete strategy. "The EMB expects a clear indication of what steps are going to be taken to achieve this goal, so that it does not simply remain empty words."

In addition to their political work to ensure that stable producer income is treated on an equal footing, the EMB's dairy farmers also lead by example when it comes to holistic sustainability. Belgian Executive Committee member Guy Francq explains: "With the [Fair Milk project](#), we have already demonstrated in many European countries that cost-covering prices and environmental and climate protection can go hand in hand. Fair Milk also helps build bridges between producers and consumers." French Executive Committee member Boris Gondouin also believes that Fair Milk still has growth potential: "For us at the EMB, it is very important to take this project to other countries as well." He adds: "But if cost-covering prices are to become commonplace in the dairy sector as a whole, we need – as described – the appropriate political framework."

[Photos of EMB General Assembly](#)

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[<<< back](#)