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Germany: new social alliance requires change of political system

Against milk seas and butter mountains - a new alliance requires change of milk politics

A new social alliance from agricultural, environmental and human rights organisations as well as animal rights groups express severe criticism concerning the current milk politics in Europe. They are asking for an immediate change of the political system.

European dairy farmers are suffering from the fall in prices of milk, which is caused by the increase of milk quota. During the discussion of the abolition of milk quota the European Commission has acted on the assumption of an increasing demand for milk products. However in July 2009, the Commission admits in her "report of milk" a decreasing demand. That is why the plans to liberalise milk markets are in a glaring contradiction to the most recent awarenesses.

Because of this, farmers got motivated to produce heaps of milk, which caused a surplus of milk products. The consequences are disastrous. A milk price of 18 to 24 Euro-Cents cannot cover costs of production.

To relieve market, the Commission decided to subsidise exports and stockkeeping. The costs resulting from subsidies have to be taken by tax-payers and add up to more than 600 million Euros.

Also dairy farmers in developing countries suffer from the mistakes of european politics. The prices of european milk products are artificially kept low by the export subsidies. That is why they are competitive to prices in third party countries and local dairy farmers are squeezed out of their own markets.

The requirements of the new alliance are clearly expressed:

In medium and long term the european milk production has to be adapted to the demand. A balance of supply and demand has to be created. This allows the development of fair prices. To succeed, dairy farmers have to concentrate their interests.

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