

News Details

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16.03.2017

Letter campaign by European dairy farmers



French farmer suicides unleash a wave of solidarity

(Brussels/Paris, 16 March 2017) Nowadays, "onerous letters" are landing on the desks of Europe's Agriculture Ministers and Agriculture Commissioner Hogan. Europe's dairy farmers have shown that they are heavily affected by the high suicide rate among their fellow colleagues and have expressed their solidarity with a French farmer who took his own life last December.

"We farmers are running out of steam," says Boris Goudouin, getting to the heart of this sad state of affairs. President of French milk producers' association APLI, he believes that it is mainly growing financial pressure coupled with a lack of prospects that pushes farmers to commit suicide. "We work round the clock but are still unable to live off our work! Debt is a system that forces us to keep producing more and more but at the end of the day, we are left with nothing."

According to the agricultural social insurance MSA France, the suicide rate among French farmers is especially high - dairy farming and cattle breeding are the most affected sectors. Milk producers' association APLI refuses to let the disappearance of their colleagues go unnoticed and already started a campaign to send letters to French Minister of Agriculture Stéphane Le Foll in late January. These letters, signed by farmers and citizens, demanded specific measures to help French milk producers.

As a sign of solidarity, milk producers from other European countries are currently sending letters to their national Agriculture Ministers as well. Letters that highlight the fate of French dairy farmers who see ending their lives as the only option. A fate that every farmer today knows only too well first-hand. Those who signed and sent letters this week demand that those responsible in the agricultural sector address the adequately known causes of the milk crisis and bring long-term stability to the dairy market. The system of unbridled liberalisation and overproduction must come to an end, stresses Boris Gondouin. "We need a European regulatory system for the dairy market to pull European dairy production out of the crisis and keep it out." Gondouin goes on to say that the EU programme of voluntary production cuts led to a price recovery. "The EMB's Market Responsibility Programme takes this approach to the logical next step and must finally be legally established!"

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