News Details

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EMB General Assembly in Brussels: Dairy farmer Denis Drennan elected new President

Europe’s dairy producers continue their commitment to fair prices and a sustainable future for agriculture

At their General Assembly in Brussels, European dairy farmers made important decisions regarding the organisation’s leadership and strategic direction for the years ahead. Denis Drennan from Ireland, a committed dairy farmer and representative of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA), takes over as President of the European Milk Board (EMB). Carine Dumont, a dairy farmer and representative of the Belgian organisation MIG, was also newly elected to the Board. The EMB warmly welcomes both of them to their new roles and looks forward to working together over the coming years to promote economically viable, fair and sustainable milk production in Europe.

A new President – and heartfelt thanks for exceptional commitment

With Denis Drennan, a dairy farmer and experienced representative of European milk producers takes the helm of the EMB. Special and heartfelt thanks were also extended to the outgoing President, Kjartan Poulsen from Denmark. Through his extraordinary dedication, perseverance and strong powers of persuasion, he has shaped the EMB’s work over the past years and vigorously represented the interests of European dairy farmers at political level. In special recognition of his tireless commitment, he was presented with the Golden Shoe at the General Assembly – an award honouring his exceptional dedication to Europe’s dairy farmers. It is therefore all the more pleasing that Kjartan Poulsen will remain on the EMB Board and continue to contribute his experience to their joint work.
The General Assembly also bid farewell to Guy Francq from Belgium as he stepped down from the Board, expressing its deep gratitude. His exceptionally energetic commitment, passion and drive have enriched the EMB’s work for many years. The Assembly expressed its particular appreciation for his tireless dedication and valuable work on behalf of European dairy farmers.

Actively shaping the dairy market: fair contracts and effective crisis instruments

Under the guiding principle “Don’t just react. Shape markets.”, the General Assembly reaffirmed its call for an agricultural policy that enables cost-covering producer prices and stable markets. The reform of the Common Market Organisation (CMO) is at the heart of these efforts. Binding contracts with review clauses and a focus on actual production costs represent important steps forward. However, loopholes and exemptions, including those for cooperatives, must not undermine their effectiveness. Strengthening the market position of producers also remains essential, as does a constructive revision of the Unfair Trading Practices (UTP) Directive to this end. In view of the continuing pressure on prices, the call for the rapid activation of the voluntary volume reduction scheme also remains highly relevant, as does the longer-term demand for a Market Responsibility Programme that can respond to market crises at an early stage.

Small and medium-sized farms must not be driven out of the market

The EMB is deeply concerned about payment systems under which smaller dairy farmers receive lower milk prices than larger farms solely because they deliver smaller volumes of milk. Such unfair competitive conditions threaten their economic survival and accelerate the disappearance of farms. The EMB firmly rejects payment systems that disadvantage these farms and drive them out of production. Fair producer prices must be achievable for all farms, regardless of their size.

Increasing requirements without adequate remuneration put pressure on farms

The situation in various European countries is also problematic due to ever-increasing requirements that fail to take account of the realities of farming. The EMB stresses that requirements imposed on agricultural production must not ignore the realities on farms and in the fields, nor must they place a one-sided burden on producers. Anyone demanding additional services and standards must also ensure that these are realistic and that the associated costs are covered.

Fair Milk: a European success story for fair producer prices

The Fair Milk projects were a particular highlight of the General Assembly, impressively demonstrating how dairy farmers themselves can develop fair marketing channels. EMB Vice-President Boris Gondouin introduced this exciting topic with passionate words. In Germany, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland, dedicated dairy farmers are sending a strong message in favour of fair producer prices and direct links with consumers through their national Fair Milk brands. Through creative campaigns, innovative products and impressive personal commitment, they highlight the value of milk and the work of those who produce it. The General Assembly expressly acknowledged the outstanding dedication of everyone who brings these successful projects to life.

Together for a sustainable future for milk production

With a new President, committed members and clear political objectives, the EMB is resolutely continuing its European cooperation. The common goal remains a dairy sector in which all farms can achieve fair, cost-covering and profitable prices and remain economically viable in the long term.

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