

News Details News Details

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News from Europe

France/ Spain/ Italy/ Portugal

In the lead-up to the extraordinary Agriculture Council on September 7 in Brussels, the Agriculture Ministers of the 4 countries have presented proposals regarding the dairy sector. However, the proposals put forward questionable measures as they do not aim to reduce overproduction. Rather they hope to raise the intervention price (without a parallel reduction in volume), to expand storage of cheese and to forward farmers the 2016 aid payments in October 2015.

Unfortunately, it seems that the Agriculture Ministers are looking to sidestep a reduction in surpluses in times of crisis on September 7 as well. This makes the milk producers' demonstration on September 7 in Brussels that much more important and it must clearly demand that surpluses be curtailed.

Germany

The Bundesverband Deutscher Milchviehhalter BDM e.V. has been drawing attention to the dire situation of dairy herders in different regions of Germany through a relay rally along different routes through Germany, which began on August 24. They have also organised a number of actions to highlight the losses suffered by milk producers and the rural sector at large due to the passiveness and attitude of denial shown by Agriculture Minister Christian Schmidt (CSU) as a representative of the current government.

The relay rally ended yesterday, September 1 in Munich with a large demonstration in Odeonsplatz square.

Besides Agriculture Minister Schmidt and Chancellor Merkel, the dairy farmers were explicitly taking Minister-President Horst Seehofer to task in Munich. As chairman of the CSU, Horst Seehofer should ensure that his party colleague Christian Schmidt assumes his responsibilities and finally acts in favour of dairy farmers.

"Now is the time to ensure that a market turnaround is hastened through appropriate measures, so that the market, and thus prices, can recover as quickly as possible. We have elaborated a proposal with a whole package of interdependent crisis measures that must be tackled at European level. This is what Minister Schmidt and party chairman Horst Seehofer have to back," explains BDM President Romuald Schaber.

Background, routes, photos and further information about the BDM relay rally can also be found on the BDM website www.bdm-verband.de!

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France

According to a survey, almost 80% of French milk producers believe that dairies will not actually pay farmers the minimum price of 34 cents/litre agreed on in July. Only 12% believe that this agreement will be effective.

Ireland

Irish producers gathered 31 August outside the European Commission Representation in Dublin to demand a guaranteed appropriate income for farmers.

UK

Protests in the UK are not ending soon. Many producers have demonstrated against the falling milk prices in the past week as well. For example, in front of Adams Food in Leek. Dozens of producers drove there with their tractors and blocked the entrance.

After numerous protests by FARMERS FOR ACTION at their supermarkets and distribution centres, Morrisons has agreed to meet with producers. Farmers want to discuss the low milk prices with companies.

Spain

In a protest action late last week in Santander against the falling milk prices, producers handed out 1000 litres of milk to consumers for free. They were also meeting with members of parliament from different parties on Monday, August 31 in Cantabria to urge them to negotiate higher milk prices.

New Zealand

The price collapse in the dairy sector has also led to lower faith in the agricultural sector in New Zealand. The price for milk powder has fallen by 60% since February 2014 - the Central Bank believes that the financial stability of the dairy sector is in peril.

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