

01.06.2021

On the offensive to ensure our survival: We need a sustained increase in milk price!



Farmer actions all across Europe on World Milk Day

(Brussels, 01/06/2021) On the occasion of World Milk Day, Europe's dairy farmers have decided to go on the offensive. Belgian dairy farmers will kick off the various actions throughout June by joining forces with development cooperation organisations. And Italy, where South Tyrolean producers are emphasising the need for an economically sustainable milk price, is also taking action on 1 June on behalf of the country's farmers. As a prelude to the June actions, the German farmers' association BDM had already demonstrated in Bonn on 27 May at the Federal Cartel Office under the motto "Look closely". Reason for these numerous actions is that the economic survival of many farmers in the EU hangs in the balance – the number of farms is fast dwindling all across the continent.

Data from a forthcoming study shows that farm managers and family labour in the EU milk sector are left with a meagre average income that is well below the minimum wage. The situation in some countries is so dire that farms do not generate any income at all. Things only continue to get worse as milk production costs increase by leaps and bounds due to higher feed costs and shortages, climate change and more demanding requirements. Prices are not evolving upwards in a similar fashion, but continue to remain impossibly low due to the current problematic political framework conditions. The protesting dairy farmers are united by a common experience – very little money actually reaches producers and their farms for the intensive work put in the production of food. Therefore, in their actions on 1 June, they are launching an urgent appeal to the dairy industry and to policy-makers for significantly better prices for their production.

This demand is further justified by the fact that major European and global dairy market indicators like the Global Dairy Trade Index or the European butter price have risen significantly in the early months of 2021. However, farm-gate milk prices paid to producers have remained at rock-bottom. This means that profits only flow into the rest of the food production chain, as has been recently demonstrated by a [value creation study of German dairies](#). This means that producers and farm employees are not being appropriately remunerated and are providing an immense amount of labour for zero compensation. Given this situation, young people have been reticent about entering milk production for a while now.

In light of this extremely tense situation, many producers are also wondering where the funding for the objectives of the Green Deal is actually going to come from. Farmers are ready to make their contribution to greater environmental sustainability; however, they cannot be left to bear the overall societal costs for the same on their own. They simply do not have the means. Production can only be sustainable if the invested labour is sustainably remunerated as well!

Please find below an overview of the actions in different countries on the occasion of World Milk Day, together with the corresponding press contacts:

Belgium, MIG, SOS Faim, Oxfam, CNCd, MLL

Cost-covering prices! For producers in Belgium, Europe and around the world!

Action on 1 June.

Contact: Guy Francq, President of MIG, 00 32 497 34 46 22

Italy

An economically sustainable milk price: the prerequisite for social and environmental sustainability!

Action on 1 June.

Contact: Markus Hafner, Vice-President Copagri South Tyrol, 00 39 340 9946025

France, Coordination Rurale

Somatic cell count: CR farmers demand accountability!

Action on 1 June.

Sophie Lenaerts, head of the milk section at Coordination Rurale (CR) says: "With the introduction of the new cell count standard, they want to make us forget the decades of injustice that have enriched the dairy industry at the expense of dairy farmers who, I would like to remind you, are among the worst paid in the profession. We cannot remain silent, and that is why we are alerting the European Commissioner for Competition. This universal standard comes much too late."

Contact: Sophie Lenaerts, head of the milk section at CR, 0033 6 13 92 74 91

Norway, Bondesolidaritet

Food power to the farmer!

Communication campaign on 1 June.

Bondesolidaritet comments: "The imbalance that has developed between the farmer's product prices and the price of purchased fixed assets, hired labour and services, is detrimental to future sustainable food production. Therefore, there is unrest and a rebellious feeling in Europe, peasant uprisings in the form of loud verbal protests in Norway, and distrust of the politicians' ability and willingness to contribute to the farmer being paid for their efforts."

Contact: Leif Langen, Bondesolidaritet director, 00 47 900 52 790

Germany, BDM

Dairies - stop stonewalling!

Various actions on 11 June.

BDM Chairman Stefan Mann comments on planned actions: "The dairies are stonewalling and creaming off profits, while we're toiling and struggling to scrape by!"

Contacts: Stefan Mann, BDM Chairman, 00 49 160 3524702

Hans Foldenauer, BDM spokesperson, 00 49 170 5638056

Note: On 27 May, the BDM had already held a [kick-off action](#) at the Federal Cartel Office in Bonn.

Switzerland, BIG-M and Uniterre

Unfair contracts for the sale of milk ruin our dairy farms!

Action on 14 June.

Werner Locher, BIG-M Secretary: "Low milk prices force dairy producers to adopt production methods that society does not accept. The numerous popular initiatives calling for a different agricultural policy are an unequivocal response."

Contact: Werner Locher, BIG-M Secretary, 00 41 44 700 04 95

Portugal, APROLEP

Politics, retail and industry: work together to overcome the milk price crisis!

Actions in the course of June.

Jorge Oliveira, President of the milk producers' organisation APROLEP comments: "In recent months, the cost of raw materials for the production of cattle feed has risen exponentially, with no prospect of a decrease any time soon. We estimate that this alone has led to an increase in production costs of two to three cents per litre of milk. This is very worrying because the producers' margin was already very low or almost zero."

Contact: Carlos Neves, General Secretary at APROLEP, 00 351 962 894 146

For a better political framework, farmers thus demand that effective instruments and measures be anchored in the Common Market Organisation of the CAP. These include effective crisis instruments, such as an effective volume reduction scheme, crisis prevention and early warning mechanisms as well as an improved market position for producers and protection against imports that undermine European standards. The Green Deal also needs a financing plan that shows how the costs of the overall societal requirements will be borne.

Agriculture needs young people to continue producing food. But they need prospects. And prospects can only really be offered with a sustainable milk price that covers costs and ensures profits.

Please click on this [link](#) to access a gallery of photos from the different actions, which will be updated regularly today and over the next few days.

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