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A resolution to introduce flexible volume regulation is the only way to calm protesters in Europe

European dairy farmers of the European Milk Board (EMB) will be driving their tractors to Brussels on October 5, to mark the special meeting of EU agriculture ministers. They expect decisions to be made which will lead to a rapid reduction in surpluses and the introduction of flexible volume regulation

Hamm/Brussels 01.10.2009: Several thousand dairy farmers from France, Germany, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Luxemburg and other countries will be taking their tractors to Brussels on October 5, when EU agriculture ministers hold a special meeting to discuss the disastrous situation that the milk market continues to be in. The aim of their demonstration at 12:00 at Rond-Point Robert Schuman is to bring home to EU politicians once and for all the necessity of introducing flexible production controls to ensure the sustainable high quality of milk production at fair prices. Daniel Condat of the French OPL had this to say: "Politicians now have a chance by making the right decisions to bring about flexible production controls to calm the farmers' protests." Pascal Massol of the French APLI added: "If this chance is wasted, then they can only expect the disappointment of the farmers to push them into taking stronger measures."

"Current EU policy is a complete failure. It has resulted in surpluses worth billions of Euros, while plunging dairy farmers into debt. What is needed is a change of system to end the blind liberalisation of the milk market and introduce a responsible marketing policy to reinstate fair prices for consumers and producers alike. Supply and demand must be brought back into equilibrium to ensure that no more surpluses are created. It will not cost the taxpayer anything because its impact on market mechanisms would be positive rather than allowing them to continue in this destructive way," said Romuald Schaber, President of the EMB, emphasising the position of dairy producers in Europe.

On September 10, French milk producers began a series of protests, which soon spread over into many other European countries. As a result, 500 million litres of milk in eight countries have failed to be delivered to dairies; protests in the form of motorway and dairy blockades, demonstrations in front of political institutions, watch fires, milk spillages and milk giveaways to consumers have been taking place since then all over Europe. In many countries, politicians have reacted and promised milk producers their support in overcoming the crisis by bringing about resolutions at both national and European levels. In addition to government leaders such as the German chancellor Angela Merkel, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, and the Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann, the President of the EU Commission José Manuel Barroso announced his intention to urge the passing of resolutions aimed at relaxing the current catastrophic situation. It is this that has led to the special meeting of EU agriculture ministers being called for October 5.

"These talks must bring about something of substance. If the politicians fail to take the chance of rendering some sensible decisions towards introducing flexible production controls, then they must take the blame for causing the farmers' protests to spread and intensify," says Erwin Schöpges of the Belgian MIG, once more pointing out the necessity of achieving successful results at the special EU meeting on Monday.

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