News Details
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PRESS RELEASE



"We are in this together"

"Enough is enough."

European milk producers refuse to let their farms waste away and resolutely announce the farmers' revolt.

Paris, 10.09.09: At a press conference held by the European Milk Board (EMB) in Paris today, French dairy farmers resolutely announced a far-reaching revolt. It is to be assumed that many dairy farmers would resort to any measures and suspend their milk supplies – that is how Pascal Massol, a French dairy farmer and President of the APLI milk producers' association, assesses the situation. (See speech of Pascal Massol here) In France alone, he says, tens of thousands of dairy farmers are livid about the negligent, ineffective approach of the European politicians to overcoming the catastrophic situation in the milk market. The mood in the rest of Europe was similar, he says. Also Daniel Condat, President of the French dairy farmer organisation OPL sees the situation to be very critical. "The farmers are at the end of their tether. The politicians are sending them like lambs to the slaughter. For months countless families have been fighting for the survival of their farms across the European agricultural landscape, and all the European Council and the European Commission have done so far is to spend a fortune on unsuitable measures and blindly pursue their policy of deregulation. That applies especially to milk, but is also true of fruit and cereals."

The representatives of the EMB that gathered this day in Paris unanimously called on the EU politicians to overhaul the agricultural policy. In unison the European milk producers added their weight to the demands the EMB had already submitted to the EU politicians on 1.09.09. The European Council and the European Commission are called upon to initiate medium-term measures for flexible, demand-driven supply control. In view of the increasing oversupply, the EMB further demands that they first help ease the critical price situation by quickly reducing the volume of milk.

Romuald Schaber, President of the European umbrella organisation, the EMB and President of the German Dairy Farmers' Association (BDM) was clear in his criticism of the superficial policy of the European Council and the European Commission. "When it's so obvious that you are on the wrong track, you have to have the courage to change direction." You have, he says, to focus on a sustainable set of solutions and not try to irresponsibly plug the gaps in a policy that failed long ago. "Measures like export subsidies do not improve the situation. They just damage dairy farmers in third world countries by putting a lot of pressure on their prices."

The milk producers' situation is as drastic as can be throughout Europe. "In many countries in Europe people can no longer stand by and watch how one dairy farm after the other goes to the wall, or to sit and wait until it's their turn", says Ernst Halbmayr, Member of the Board of the EMB and spokesman for the Austrian organisation IG-Milch. "It's not just the French dairy farmers that are so furious, scared about their livelihood and prepared to fight for their farms. The governments of the EU and those at the top of the European Commission have an obligation to take the necessary corrective steps."

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Further Information

Speech Pascal Massol, APLI english(dutch)

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Report, Marcus Nürnberger (german)

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