

News Details

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Press release: EMB Rejects Pseudo-Solutions from the EU Ministers of Agriculture!

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[video Talk EMB with Belgian delegation](#)

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A huge eye was erected outside the building where the European Ministers of Agriculture are meeting in Brussels to symbolise the close eye every European milk producer is keeping on them. With tractors from the 14 member states of the EMB guarding it, the eye is firmly focused on the European politicians. Today they have to prove that they are countering the milk crisis with effective measures. No pseudo-solutions will be accepted.

Hamm/Brussels, 20.11.09: Today, the European Ministers of Agriculture will decide in Brussels on measures aimed at overcoming the milk market crisis. The European Milk Board (EMB) expects the politicians to have really understood what the core issue is. On the one hand, we have flexible supply control as an effective measure. On the other hand and diametrically opposed is the policy of subsidies, intervention and export dumping, which cannot solve the problems and in fact only exacerbates them further.

The President of the EMB, Romuald Schaber, emphasises the need for a differentiated viewpoint: "It is important for the general public to be able to differentiate between effective and ineffective measures. One item on the agenda of the Ministers' meeting today will be the 280 million euros released by the European Commission. That won't stop any farm from going bankrupt." Schaber went on: "It may well be that at first glance the outsider thinks these funds will help the dairy farmers. That is simply not true. It is cynical of the politicians or farmers' unions to stand there and say that this money is a solution. It is wrong to deceive the general public." The only measure that could be regarded as partly effective, Schaber said, was the second one on which the Ministers of Agriculture were expected to be deciding today. This is the state buying quotas, enabling an immediate reduction of production. "To a limited extent, that could help defuse the catastrophic situation in the milk market. It would be effective if as many states as possible were to become involved," said Schaber. However, what is fundamental is that a real change in the system is introduced today in the direction of supply control.

Sieta van Keimpema, Vice-President of the EMB, is clear about what is called for to overcome the milk crisis in the long term. "The EU politicians have to correct what caused the crisis. And that is a system that encourages over-production." She said that the only way of countering over-production was to change the current system. A mechanism had to be put in place to analyse what the actual market demand was and to adjust production accordingly. Only then could there be fair prices for consumers and producers and farms be stopped from closing down.

Erwin Schöpges from the Belgian EMB milk producers' organisation Milcherzeuger Interessengemeinschaft (MIG) summarised the problem as follows: "Injecting funds on a one-off basis at the taxpayers' expense won't do anything to solve the problem. Anyone who thinks that will let them off the hook is wrong."

To stress the urgency of the EMB's demand for flexible supply control, French milk producers have already re-started protest campaigns. Daniel Condat from the French OPL: "The measures the European Ministers of Agriculture take today must pave the way for a change in the system." Pascal Massol from the French milk producers' organisation APLI added: "The European Milk Board producers will keep at it until the idea of changing the system is conclusively put into practice."

Contacts:

EMB President Romuald Schaber (DE): 0049/15155037174

Belgium (MIG) - Erwin Schöpges (DE, FR): 0032/497904547

EMB Press Office: Silvia Däberitz (DE, EN, ES): 0049/ 23814360495

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