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Press Release European Coordination Via Campesina



Dairy crisis: The EU Agriculture Council , who meets on October 5th, has to enter into the regulation of production.

An informal meeting of the Agricultural Council, without decision-making power, will meet on October 5th, under pressure of the various actions of dairy producers, and at the request of 20 Member States which published a Joint Declaration on the dairy crisis.

This declaration does not really question the current dairy policy and considers only a light market regulation, without calling upon the necessary REGULATION OF PRODUCTION, which is a precondition. If the Council meeting sticks to that vision, there will be no progress. The producers must then remain mobilized.

As the Commissioner relies on the mandate of the EU summit of last June to make her proposals, only a new Summit on the dairy and agricultural crisis will be able to give another mandate to the Commission to modify the bad decisions of 2003 and 2008. The European Coordination Via Campesina thus asks the Agricultural Council of October 5th to propose to the Heads of State a true immediate change of dairy policy.

From 15 years the EU leitmotiv has been to adapt to the market. But when the dairy demand falls, the EU refuses to decrease the production to meet the demand. That means that the objective of the EU was not the adaptation to the market, but the submission of production to the downstream sector, an oligopoly which presses farm prices down, and the accelerated restructuration of production: the EU bleeds the countryside and dares speak about rural development, while projects of very dairy large farms flower.

Let us look at what occurs in Switzerland, where the dairy quotas were removed. The regulation of production by quotas was replaced by private contracts between dairy and producer, where the contracts stipulate that the strike of delivery is prohibited. The farm price is also too low in Switzerland and the producers started a "farmer's revolt" , as in the EU.

The EU should not follow the Swiss example. It must adapt the dairy quotas to the demand and better distribute them between regions, Member States, producers in order to obtain a remunerative milk price and to develop a sustainable and multifunctional family dairy farming, which saves inputs.

The current policy makes no sense and remains misunderstood by consumers and taxpayers. They wonder why the EU imports such an amount of soya (environmental and social damages in Latin America, GMO problems), that are processed into milk, then into dried milk (energy waste), then exported with subsidies paid by taxpayers (dumping harmful to third countries). The declaration of the 20 does not mention it and wants on the contrary to increase these subsidies!

The way out of the crisis is not, as the declaration of the 20 suggests, to copy the instruments of the wine or fruit and vegetable sectors, which are in a very difficult situation and in full industrialization.

The European Coordination Via Campesina published last spring proposals for a way out of crisis. We ask the European Council and the Agricultural Council of October 5th to take them into account before it becomes too late for most of the milk producers.

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[<<< back](#)