

20.10.2009

Press Release: European Dairy Farmers Achieve First Successful Reactions from EU Politicians



The EU Council of Agriculture Ministers is showing movement. However European Milk Board (EMB) dairy farmers pass their own measures in Luxemburg

[protest photos](#)

Luxemburg/Hamm, 20.10.2009: Pan-European protests have culminated in a major demonstration by 5,000 dairy farmers with 900 tractors which took place yesterday in Luxemburg. For the first time, politicians showed concrete movement towards the position taken by the representative body for European dairy farmers, the European Milk Board (EMB). Following the meeting of the EU Council of Agriculture Ministers, EMB representatives met with the President of the EU Council, Eskil Erlandsson. "He announced that everything needed to be done to restore equilibrium to the market," said Romuald Schaber, President of the EMB. Fredy de Martines of the Luxemburg EMB organisation, the LDB, added: "this is the first time that we are hearing these kinds of comments from politicians. This tells that our struggles are worthwhile and always have been."

Two measures in particular that were announced after the meeting of the EU Agriculture Council are particularly noteworthy. First of all, concrete suggestions need to be worked out in detail by November 19 for the voluntary suspension of quotas by buying up partial volumes and entire farming units. The supply rights must no longer be utilised. "This will finally allow us to effectively remove the excess milk supplies from the market," said Ernst Halbmayr of IG-Milch in Austria. "However, this measure should be used voluntarily in the member countries. The EMB is expressly calling on all countries to make use of this opportunity, and to take responsibility for the dairy farmers." Roberto Cavaliere of the APL in Italy said: "We welcome the fact that this suggestion has been taken up. It is much better than the attempt by the traditional European farmers' association, the COPA, to demand a slaughter premium, which then fails to materialise."

Furthermore, the high level group, made up of senior representatives of all the national EU governments, was instructed today to devise proposals for a solution to the milk market problem, including a regulatory framework. "This is something completely new, the fact that they now want to concern themselves with market regulations," said Pascal Massol of the APLI in France. "They also passed the decision to invite the EMB to the meeting on November 10. This will give us a chance to reiterate our demands for flexible production controls."

"We would like to make it absolutely clear that the dairy farmers will never retreat as much as a single millimetre from their demands," said Sieta van Keimpema, Vice President of the EMB. "For this reason, we will be convening our own high level group over the next two weeks to look into the problems of the milk market, which will include representatives from civil society groups such as consumer organisations, scientists and non-governmental organisations, as well as politicians. The aim will be to find joint answers to the problems of the current milk market policy and to make preparations for setting up a monitoring office." This will provide dairy farmers with a framework of civil-social consensus to give them the responsibility to deduce milk requirements in Europe in association with both dairies and the politicians. This is the direction that milk production is to take by way of flexible production controls.

"As a further step", said Schaber, "we will begin to concentrate milk in Europe beyond its borders. This will lend us even more weight with respect to dairies and politicians. We have control over milk. This means that we also can determine a future price which will enable the sustainable development of milk production."

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Activity in Brittany: In Rennes french farmers have distributed milk to consumers in front of the Parliament of Brittany, while the Farm ministers met in Luxembourg. About 20 farmers came with their tractors. Also the Coordination rurale and the Confédération paysanne were participating the organisation of this action.

Commissioner Fischer Boel has just before the Farm Council in Luxembourg announced to provide another 280 Mio Euros to the dairy sector.

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