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Press release: European dairy farmers announce details of big demonstration on 7 September

“We are demonstrating for a cut in volumes in the milk market, not for subsidies”

(Brussels, 02.09.2015) Many are expected to turn up: thousands of people and hundreds of tractors at a demonstration for a sound milk policy on 7 September during the extraordinary EU Council meeting in Brussels. At today's press conference in the run-up to the demonstration, representatives of the European dairy farmers announced details of the European Milk Board (EMB) demo.

“As you know, strong protests by dairy farmers are flaring up all over Europe. The farmers are furious and are now coming to Brussels on 7 September to denounce loudly and clearly the current EU policy of unlimited production”, said EMB President Romuald Schaber. “It is important to us that the public understands there are good and bad strategies for the milk market. And that people know that the dairy farmers are demonstrating for cuts in volumes, not subsidies, to enable a fair price to be achieved”, Romuald Schaber continued. That is why, he said, in times of crisis volumes must be cut using a crisis programme – the Market Responsibility Programme (MRP).

Misguided strategy

Dairy farmers are angry that the damaging export drive is being pushed in particular by the German government, the EU Commission, and some farmers' organisations. Because the export drive is boosting milk production and triggered off the milk market crisis. Anyone wanting to now flood other markets with milk – be they in China or Iran – who refuses to cut his own production, is either blind or patently not interested in a future for European milk production. Because it is not the Russian ban on imports or the decreasing demand for milk in China that triggered off the crisis, it is the fact that the reaction to a fall in demand is an increase in production, especially in the EU.

“We dairy farmers can no longer take seriously anyone helping to promote such a misguided strategy, maintaining that the Russian ban on imports was to blame for everything, and simply calling for subsidies and an increase in the intervention price”, says Schaber, underlining the European dairy farmers' attitude.

To bring an end to the ignorance and misguided strategy of EU Commissioner Phil Hogan, German Minister of Agriculture Christian Schmidt, and representatives of European farmers' organisations, European dairy farmers will now be making their way to Brussels in the next few days. Their demands for 7 September are crystal clear:

- Cost-covering milk prices and a crisis instrument, the Market Responsibility Programme (MRP), NOW!
- *The money from the super-levy must be used immediately to finance a voluntary cut on milk supply, in order to reduce the volume!*

Details of the EMB demonstration on 7 September

- Press conference: 09:30 hours at the Résidence Palace press centre (the “Passage” room), rue de la Loi 155, 1040 Brussels
- Big demonstration: 11:00 hours outside the European Council - Justus Lipsius building, roundabout Schuman, B-1048 Brussels

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