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Press release: First European Fair Milk Conference

Ciolos, Oxfam and Slow Food receive the “Golden Faironika”

Photos of the event

(Brussels, 6.11.2014) The first European Fair Milk Conference is being held in Ciney, Belgium, today. For several years now the European Milk Board has been drawing attention to the necessity for cost-covering milk prices with the slogan "Fair Milk". With this conference Erwin Schöpges, member of the EMB Board and President of Faircoop, Belgium, aims to bring together the dairy farmers, retail trade, consumers and politicians to point up the importance of fairly produced milk. “It is only through such projects that we can maintain our family farms in the future and guarantee people high-quality food at fair prices”, said Schöpges.

Fair Milk products are currently marketed in six countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Italy and Austria). Ernst Halbmayr, who initiated the Fair Milk project in Austria in 2006, explains that “local farmers benefit from people buying the Fair Milk, because every litre gives our farmers a modest 10 cents extra. Only a fair price policy can ensure that family farms survive in the long run, produce high-quality milk and help preserve the rural cultural landscapes.”

Awarding of the Golden Faironika

The artificial cow “Faironika” – the European dairy farmers’ symbol for a cost-covering farm-gate milk price – is to be seen throughout Europe in the respective national colours. Today for the first time the “Golden Faironika” was awarded for special services to sustainable and fair food or milk production. The prize was awarded in each of the categories “Politician”, “Organisation”, “Farmer” and “Consumer”. On a European level, the golden cow prizes went to the former Commissioner for Agriculture Dacian Ciolos, the Slow Food organisation, and the German farmer Michael Alterauge.

Romuald Schaber, President of the European Milk Board, welcomed the awarding of the prize to the former Commissioner for Agriculture: “Ciolos realised that the European milk market could not be left to its own devices. With the Milk Market Observatory he took the important first step in the right direction”.

The host country Belgium awarded the Golden Faironika to the erstwhile Walloon Minister for Agriculture Benoît Lutgen (in the Politician category), Oxfam Solidarité (Organisation) and the Belgian dairy farmer Christian Eloy. Mr Dominique Michel accepted the Faironika Honorary Award on behalf of the retail trade’s association COMEOS (FEDIS).

In his keynote speech Jean-Louis Zeien explained that fair milk production should not stop at national borders. The President of Fairtrade Luxembourg referred to the responsibility of the countries of Europe for the developing nations. “The EU milk market’s focus on exports has fatal consequences for local milk production in the Southern hemisphere”, said Zeien.

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