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Press release: Solution for the EU dairy sector within reach for the first time

The European Milk Board's demands heard by politicians

Berlin, 16.01.2014: 2014 will be a key year for European milk production. After the tough negotiations on the Milk Package and the CAP, a solution for the EU milk market is now within reach for the first time. In the next few months, the EU Commission intends to table proposals for a market monitoring agency in the milk sector – something that has been demanded by the European Milk Board (EMB) for years could become a political reality. Romuald Schaber, President of the EMB, stresses the importance of the market monitoring agency: “Equipped with the requisite powers this institution could be a first step towards long-term stabilisation of European milk production.”

The producers' situation remains tense

A study carried out by the BAL (Büro für Agrarsoziologie & Landwirtschaft) provides evidence that farmers' production costs are not covered by farm-gate milk prices. Last year the picture was one of slightly higher income but again markedly higher production costs. In July 2013, for instance, the costs in Germany were 42 cents a litre, yet the average milk price was only 38.55 cents. So once again dairy farmers were unable to make a profit despite a rise in earnings in 2013, and continued to sustain losses. This situation makes one thing clear: to cover costs, prices must be higher across the board.

Study shows: market regulation is necessary

In September 2013, there was a conference organised by the EU Commission on the future of the EU milk sector after 2015. Taking a recent study, the EMB proved the necessity of a neutral regulatory agency for the European milk market. “As the study shows, past crises could have been avoided with such a monitoring agency. If the planned monitoring agency is set up on this model, there is a chance of stabilising the EU milk market appreciably from 2015”, said Romuald Schaber. The fact that a solution for the entire EU milk sector now seems possible is primarily due to the focused work of the European Milk Board and its member organisations. Without the initiative of the EMB, the intense discussion in the EU would never have taken place.

Now it has to be put into practice

But discussion alone is not enough: “Now's the time for concrete instruments”, insists Romuald Schaber. “The monitoring agency must be set up in such a way that it can react to the market situation by adjusting volumes.” The milk market could only be stabilised in the long term with demand-led production. The European Milk Board therefore calls on European decision-makers to turn the good approaches into reality. Because Europe needs milk production throughout Europe and strong milk producers. And the EMB will ensure that the milk producers' voice continues to be heard clearly in Europe.

The European Milk Board (EMB) is a European umbrella association of dairy farmer organisations. It currently represents 19 organisations from 14 European countries with a total of about 100,000 producers. About 75% of European milk is produced in the EMB member countries.

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