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World Milk Day: Fairness in the dairy sector - from cow stall to fridge shelf



(Brussels, 01.06.2018) Even in 2018, an appeal on World Milk Day for fairness in the dairy sector is not excessive but is, in fact, the need of the day! After all, fair prices are especially important for us milk producers in the EU as well as for our colleagues on other continents.

Fairness for colleagues from African countries

It is the responsibility of the EU to implement an agricultural and food policy that also keeps the least developed countries in mind. Milk surpluses in Europe not only ruin prices for our farmers, they also flood African markets and prevent the development of the local dairy sector. The EMB is currently participating in [a campaign to support local milk in West Africa](#) in order to draw attention to this issue. For example, 48 million herders in the Sahel draw their income from grazing; hundreds of thousands of pastoralist families live off the production and processing of local milk. We in the EU must produce in a way that does not endanger the livelihood of these people!

For many years now, the milk producers of the EMB have been in contact with their African colleagues and have even documented the effects of EU milk powder exports in an [exhibition](#). Europe's farmers must not only unite to defend their common goals, they must also show solidarity with producers in third countries.

More fairness in production as a keystone for a stable EU dairy market

There are increasing signs among EU policy-makers that there is will to take constructive action to combat the chronic overproduction and unfair prices in the dairy sector. In the '[Report on the future of food and farming](#)', a large majority of the European Parliament demands effective instruments to better match supply and demand. The report explicitly mentions the possibility of reducing milk volumes during crises as well as expanding the scope of the Milk Market Observatory to include preventive action in the case of market imbalances in the future. It also states that sensitive sectors like raw milk production should be protected during negotiations for free trade agreements. It is now up to the European Commission to actually implement the European Parliament's guidelines within the ongoing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy! The goal must be to anchor instruments like the [Market Responsibility Programme \(MRP\)](#) at EU level.

Actively promoting fairness: The Fair Milk project by farmers

Working on the implementation of a political framework is one thing. Engaging directly with the market creatively, responsibly and passionately is quite the other. In this way, EMB milk producers in seven countries have taken their fate into their own hands and founded the 'Fair Milk' brand. Receiving fair prices and thus ensuring the sustainability of farms so that they can be handed down to the next generation – these are the goals of our milk producers. Consumers can actively support fair farming by purchasing Fair Milk products.

To honour and celebrate this commitment shown by dairy farmers, the fifth European 'Fair Milk Conference' will be held on 14 June in Lille, France. In recent years, the event has become a meeting point and forum for farmers, processors, consumers and policy-makers, where everything revolves around fairly-produced milk products. Would you like to participate? Then see you on 14 June in Lille – you are cordially invited!

Fairness is the foundation of a stable dairy market and should be the common theme along the length of the food chain – from dairy farm to consumer, from cow stall to fridge shelf. We, European milk producers, will continue to take decisive action to ensure fair conditions and on the occasion of World Milk Day, we would also like to thank everyone who has supported us through the years in this struggle. Be it through reporting on the real situation in the dairy sector or by deciding to buy fair milk products, all of which contribute to the survival of our farms and a rural Europe.

It is now time for European policy-makers to play their part and lay the foundation for a future-oriented fair agricultural policy.

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