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FARMERS' UNION OF WALES

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FUW BACKS EUROPEAN DAIRY FARM PROTESTS SEND

Farmers' Union of Wales vice president Eifion Huws today described protests by European dairy farmers as a "stark warning" for dairies and supermarkets and backed those taking part.

The protests, involving thousands of farmers across Europe, are a response to rising milk production prices overtaking increases in farmgate prices. They have involved hundreds of Dutch dairy farmers demonstrating outside the Friesland Foods factory in Nijkerk and thousands of farmers refusing to supply milk to dairy cooperatives and food manufacturers.

Similar actions have also been developing in Italy, France, Luxembourg and Spain, while German milk deliveries are estimated to have dropped by 90 per cent as a result of farmers withholding milk supplies.

In response to the protests, German homes and hospitals have been advised to stock up on fresh milk.

Mr Huws, chairman of the FUW's milk and dairy produce committee, said: "While farmgate milk prices have seen a much needed boost over the past 12 months, for many businesses these improvements have been more than eaten up by massive hikes in production costs, with core overheads such as feed and fertiliser going through the roof.

"This effect is being felt across Europe and we are now seeing the results. Last year the supermarkets and dairies woke up to the realities of facing major milk shortages in the near future.

"This pan-European action stands as a stark warning that prices must rise significantly if we are to avoid returning to such a scenario. I give my full support to all those taking part in this quest for equitable farmgate prices."

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