



European Milk Board (EMB)

Press release

Solidarity and unity among milk producers in Europe has forged a new bargaining position

To push ahead with negotiations the European milk delivery stop has been suspended

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There was a mass demonstration of milk producers at 2 p.m. today at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Besides Romuald Schaber, Chairman of the Federal Association of German Dairy Farmers (BDM) and President of the European Milk Board, and two more representatives of the BDM, the assembled farmers also heard representatives of milk producers from the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland and the Managing Director of the European Milk Board. "This solidarity shown by the European milk producers in the last 10 days and the united stance they have taken in their demands is unprecedented", stressed Romuald Schaber.

There was, he said, across-the-border agreement that long-term cost-covering milk producer prices called for a new position of the milk producers in the producer / processor / retail set-up. According to EMB Vice-President Sieta van Keimpema, this was "achievable only by the right pooling of producers. The events of the last few days have proven that together we have succeeded in this pooling approach." The European milk producers were, she said, agreed that a fundamental precondition for a fair payment for milk was effective control of volumes that had to be imposed on politicians by collaboration with the dairies. This included protection from outside to prevent the importation of produce being supplied from other parts of the world for whatever reasons at ever lower prices.

Early talks with the dairy industry were conducted both on an association level and with the individual dairies. "To enable negotiations with the dairy industry and afterwards with the politicians to be conducted calmly, the European milk producers have decided to take the initiative and suspend the milk supply boycott", said Romuald Schaber at the end of the rally in Berlin. From this evening, milk producers will be resuming the supply of milk for the time being. It was also important not to jeopardise supply to consumers.

"Consumers have massed behind our demands. In the last few days they have also shown considerable understanding for our situation and the milk producers' approach. For that we would like to express our most sincere thanks once again", said Schaber. People were prepared to pay slightly higher prices for dairy produce if it were certain it was going into the farmers' pockets. That is why in future it will also be crucial that milk price bargaining is based on the costs of producing milk and is made as transparent as possible.

Attestations of solidarity have come from every corner: church organisations have pointed out the importance of fair milk prices in Europe for agriculture, in the southern hemisphere as well. Farmers from Canada and Brazil along with many associations here have expressed their approval.

Milk producers are now waiting for serious talks to start with the dairy industry: talks not only about a base price of 43 eurocents a litre, but also about creating a market that works.

Current information about the status of negotiations and the situation in the member countries, please see our website: www.europeanmilkboard.org

Contact: Romuald Schaber (German) - mobile : 0049 / 151 5503 7174
Sieta van Keimpema (Dutch, English) - mobile: 0031 / 612 168 000
Sonja Kerspeter (French, English) - mobile: 0049 / 178 60 21 685