



**European Milk Board**



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## **To the European Union Ministers of Agriculture**

Dear Sirs,

You are gathering in Annecy in the next few days to discuss the future of the European Agricultural Policy. It is evident from the preliminary paper that food safety of the European Union and the world population, the balance of rural areas and improving the environment situation are regarded as key objectives.

To be able to achieve these objectives in the future it is crucial to create the preconditions for farmers to be paid **sustainably cost-covering prices for their products**. Only then will they be able to carry on producing high-quality food in healthy and diverse landscapes for the reliable supply of European consumers at fair prices.

The European Milk Board, which lobbies on behalf of milk producers in 14 European countries, sees the **creation of a flexible volume control system for the milk market in Europe** as the basic precondition for cost-covering producer prices. The volume limits set over years must be replaced by a system that adjusts the volume flexibly to the changing sales potential for milk and dairy products.

The legally controversial decision taken on 1/04/2008 to raise quotas by 2%, or the move still being proposed by the EU Commission to increase quotas annually by 1% until 2013 further exacerbate the **oversupply of milk**. This puts the milk producers' income in jeopardy; the pressure for further rationalisation and intensification grows at the expense of rural areas. The strategy of export dumping is continuing – with prices that do not cover costs through to export refunds.

The **milk producers are prepared to make their contribution to a balanced milk market**, as well in the shape of an individual-farm volume scheme and as in the form of a self-funded levy that enables them to carry out measures of flexible volume control under their own responsibility in the milk market. Because their aim is to operate actively in the market and to generate their income from the market. In this, they are reliant on three elementary general conditions to be created by the European Agricultural Policy:

Effective protection from outside

An individual-farm volume limit

A right for milk producers to unite for the purpose of demand-driven volume control.

We therefore call on you, the Ministers of Agriculture of the European Union, to make a clear commitment to market-oriented control of supply beyond 2013, in order to ensure under the Common Agricultural Policy sustainable pan-European agriculture and with it foodsovereignty for Europe.

Yours faithfully,

Romuald Schaber (President of the European Milk Board)

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