

Background information on campaigns in Germany

Milk price development

Milk prices in Germany have fallen sharply since the beginning of the year and have now reached the South of the country too. The prices paid to the dairy farmers there are between 32.65 and 41.75 eurocents a kilo. In Northern Germany, the trend towards lower milk prices continues unabated. Some dairies in the northern federal states of Germany for instance are paying only 27 eurocents a kilo. That is on a par with last year's figure. Since then operating costs have risen by about 7 eurocents a kilo of milk.

The supermarkets have slashed consumer prices for dairy products: certified milk: 61eurocents; butter 250g: 75 eurocents), this being preceded by price agreements with the dairies, which are as much as 15 eurocents down on last year.

Negotiations broken down

All the BDM's efforts to come to an agreement with politicians and the dairy industry on joint measures for a balanced milk market and accordingly on fair prices for everyone concerned have so far proven unsuccessful.

The Federal Association of German Dairy Farmers (BDM) has now decided to defend itself against the decline in producer prices with a "Milk Price Campaign 2008". This campaign begins on Monday, 26 May 2008, at 11.00 a.m. with a mass demonstration outside the Weihenstephan dairy in Freising/Weihenstephan that belongs to Müllermilch: thousands of milk producers from all over Germany as well as milk producers from neighbouring European countries are expected to turn up. Further measures including a ban on supply are to be announced at this demonstration.

Speakers at the mass demonstration outside the Weihenstephan dairy on Monday:

Stefan Mann, Deputy Chairman of the Federal Association of German Dairy Farmers

Maria Heubuch, Chairwoman of "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Bäuerliche Landwirtschaft", Germany

Mute Schimpf, Adviser to Agrar, Misereor (Catholic organisation of development aid cooperation)

Roberto Cavaliere, Member of the Executive Committee of the European Milk Board, Chairman of APL Pianadura Padana, Italy

Sieta van Keimpema, Vice-President of the European Milk Board, Chairman of the Dutch Dairymen Board, the Netherlands

Romuald Schaber, Chairman of the Federal Association of German Dairy Farmers, President of the European Milk Board

Unrestricted ban on milk supply

At the demonstration on Monday the beginning of an unrestricted milk supply stop will be announced, starting nationwide from Tuesday. In tandem dairy farmers and consumers will be making large purchases of milk from Monday.

The BDM's demands are identical with the demands of EMB:

- Base price 2008
- A system of fixing a base price calculated on the basis of the production costs
- Flexible volume control

plus the following two demands:

- An adjustment of the conversion system from litre to kilo (1.02 to 1.03)
- The establishment of a producer-financed levy enabling the buy-out of milk when volumes are at a peak

The milk supply stop is not to finish until the dairy industry has consented in writing to the base price demand and has also signed concrete commitments in relation to the other demands. A temporary lifting of the supply stop in order for negotiations to be resumed is likewise subject to written commitments.

The supply stop means that the farmers no longer deliver to the dairy, instead they leave the milk at their farm, commercialise it themselves as far as possible and dispose of the rest (see also detailed comments on communication).