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## Press release

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### **Health-Check Proposals by the EU Commission Leave Milk Market Untouched Flexible Market Control Essential for Sustainable Milk Production in Europe**

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The EU Commission's milk market policy aims to abolish the quota system. In the reform proposals it is envisaging today for the 'Health Check', it will put forward an annual milk-quota increase of 1 per cent in the period from 2010/11 to 2014/15. Yet even before assessing EU agricultural reform in the 'Health Check', the EU Commission, supported by interested circles (milk industry), has only just increased the milk volume by two per cent as from April 2008. This is the equivalent of an additional 2.84 million t of milk.

Romuald Schaber, President of the European Milk Board, representing the interests of Europe's dairy farmers, comments: "Even now, slight increases in milk volumes in the EU are once again putting massive pressure on milk prices in the EU – after several months of some dairies paying milk farmers the cost-covering milk price of over 40 cents/l. An unbridled increase in the volume of milk is jeopardising European milk production. "The European Milk Board therefore puts forward its demand not simply to abolish the existing system of regulating volumes but to replace it with a flexible instrument that harmonises supply and demand. The basis must not be estimated market trends but actual sales prospects on the market. Sieta van Keimpema, EMB Vice President, explains: "Only on a well-balanced milk market is it possible for dairy farmers, dairies and retailers to work as partners on an equal footing." This is what the organisations represented in the EMB call a change of system: In future, dairy farmers want to cooperate on equal terms with representatives from the dairy industry and retailers.

Fair milk-producer prices are essential for the continuation of sustainable, high-quality milk production in Europe, one that attaches importance to animal welfare and maintains the cultural landscape. Fair milk prices for farmers will ensure food security and ultimately guarantee the population a supply of fresh milk, today and in the future. This requires flexible control of volumes on the milk market.

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