

German dairy strike could happen here say ICMSA

The President of ICMSA, Jackie Cahill, has sent a message of support to the German dairy farmers who have today embarked on a strike and warned that the level of frustration amongst dairy farmers was such that he could envisage the spread of such a tactic.

“There is huge degree of resentment amongst dairy farmers in the wake of the recent round of price cuts. These farmers have invested hundreds of thousands of euro to meet the demands of the Nitrates Directive, input costs are rising by the week - based on official CSO data, total farm costs have increased by 20 per cent since March 2007 with substantially greater increases have been faced by dairy farmers given the escalating price of feed and fertiliser - and after nine months of decent prices we now see Co-ops cutting their milk prices paid to farmers by a margin that is shocking. There is no justification whatsoever for any more cuts in milk price by Co-ops. In fact, they have already cut the price more than could be possibly required and I would call on all Co-op Directors to at least pay the same price for May milk as they have for April”, said Mr Cahill.

“It is precisely this price/cost squeeze that has led 9,000 farmers to demonstration in Germany today where they decided to embark on a milk strike with effect from tomorrow until such time as milk purchasers pay a realistic price. Their demand is 43 cent/litre and I’d point out that the farm input costs and the cost of living generally in Ireland are similar if not higher than for our German counterparts”, continued the ICMSA President.

“It is against this background that we are calling on Co-op Directors not to sanction any further milk price reductions of the type that would push farmers’ frustrations past the tipping point. In the medium term, ICMSA is still confident of an increased return from the market place and we will be insisting that every single cent of that improvement must be passed on to dairy farmers”, he concluded.

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