

Question for written answer E-014728/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Mara Bizzotto (ENF)

Subject: Indefinite protests by dairy farmers in northern Italy in fight for the survival of the Italian dairy industry

On 7 November 2015, Coldiretti (national federation of farmers) reported that one thousand farms had closed down during the year, resulting in the loss of many jobs and causing severe damage to local economies and the reputation of Italian produce around the world.

The cause of this crisis is clear: with a litre of milk costing between 39 and 41 cents, dairy farmers can earn no more than 34 cents per litre produced.

This financially unsustainable situation for farmers is compounded by daily imports of 3.5 billion litres of milk from abroad, together with concentrates, curds, powdered milk and semi-finished products, which are then used to produce 'Italian' milk and mozzarella and other cheeses, without consumers being aware that this is happening.

Across the length and breadth of northern Italy, thousands of dairy farmers are engaged in indefinite protests to secure the introduction of a clear and transparent labelling system and measures to protect their high-quality products, picketing multinationals, holding sit-ins complete with cattle and tractors in front of supermarkets, and manning road blocks.

- What urgent steps will the Commission take to protect Italian dairy producers against the effects of the collapse in milk prices?
- Does it intend to devise a special labelling scheme for EU upland dairy products of outstanding quality, which are currently in danger of disappearing as a result of a combination of high production costs and competition from big business?