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EDA shows support for dairy processors

12 February 2010

Imbalances in the dairy supply chain will not be solved by intermediaries and standardised contracts, according to the European Dairy Association (EDA).

Some commentators are arguing for strong pan European contracts and third party representation for farmers to prevent processors from earning profits from the dairy industry at the expense of farmers.

The EDA is making a stand against these proposals as the EU High Level Group on milk aims to redefine the future relationship between farmers and processors.

One of the objectives of the High Level Group is to determine what can be done to improve the bargaining power of milk producers.

The EDA, which represents the interests of dairy processors, has argued against a French proposal for intermediaries to negotiate with processors on behalf of farmers.

The group's general secretary Joop Kleibeuker says more than 50% of the milk collected in Europe is processed and distributed by cooperatives in which farmers have a stake.

He claims this undermines the assumption that processors and producers operate separately with distinct agendas and interests.

In Europe, the relationship between producers and processors is not straightforward, and according to Kleibeuker, this complexity should also inform discussions about contracts.

The general secretary said the EU should be careful not to lay down contracts in regulation because the relationship between processors and farmers is so varied that a one size fits all approach to contracts would be inappropriate.

The EDA will now attempt to raise awareness about how the dairy supply chain works.

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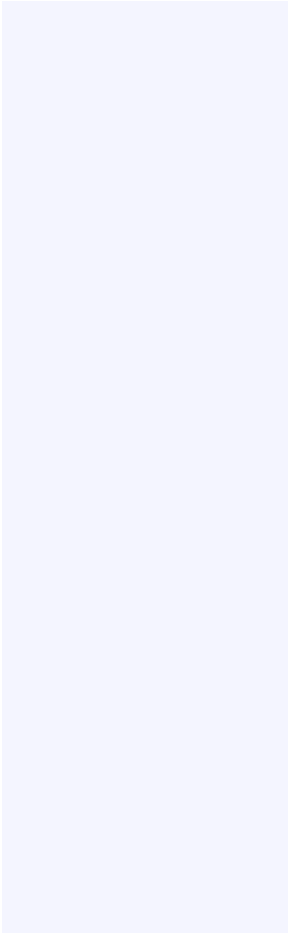
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