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PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY BERTUS DE JONGH,
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MPO warns against protest action

"The Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO) shares EU milk producer organisations' concerns over the effect of subsidised milk exports on the dairy industries of developing countries, but is not in a position to become involved with dairy politics in the EU," said Bertus de Jongh, chief executive officer of the MPO, in reaction to the continuing protest action by milk producers in the European Union.

"The MPO has empathy with the suffering of milk producers across the world, but does not have sufficient knowledge and information to become involved with the internal dairy politics of other countries. South African circumstances differ markedly from those in Europe where quotas and state subsidies play a big role in the dairy industry. Africa is also characterised by its huge food shortages and, in light of this situation, the MPO cannot express itself in favour of milk spillage."

During the International Dairy Federation's recent World Dairy Summit in Berlin, the MPO held talks with various role players in the German dairy industry. According to De Jongh, it is clear that the industry in Germany has suffered major damage due to the continuing protest action. Dairy usage has dropped and producer ranks are divided between radicals and moderate producers.

Thorkild Rasmussen, head of the EU Commission's dairy policy department, also emphasised at the World Dairy Summit that the EU's dairy policy has the interests of milk producers at heart and that the existing dairy policy will be executed. This stance was again confirmed last week by EU Commissioner, Mariann Fischer Boel, at a meeting of EU agricultural ministers.

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