

**Question for written answer E-007242/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Abolition of milk quotas

Between 2009 and 2014, milk quotas rose by 1 % each year. This was done in order to gradually phase out such quotas before their eventual abolition in 2015.

The abolition of quotas will allow production of dairy products to be increased. Both traditional and industrial farmers will then be able to produce as much milk as they wish, leading to falling prices which will be more difficult for small-scale producers to deal with.

The EU has adopted a 'Milk Package', which provides for contracts between farmers and dairy processors and which should strengthen the position of producers. However, these measures have failed to reassure producers, who remember the crisis of 2009, when the EU released EUR 1 billion in disaster relief to support the sector.

The Commission has established a Milk Market Observatory in order to protect the dairy sector.

1. Given that 40 % of dairy farms have disappeared in 10 years and that the abolition of quotas could further undermine small-scale farmers, is the Commission taking account of small-scale farmers in its Milk Market Observatory?

The Commission has recognised the need to consider crisis-prevention mechanisms in order to help the sector weather the transition to a post-quota environment.

2. Six months from the abolition of quotas, what is the state of play as regards these crisis-prevention mechanisms?