Milky day: Farmers dump thousands of litres of milk on Brussels police, European Parliament

Dairy farmers poured 15,000 litres of milk on the European Parliament building in Brussels, Belgium, in a protest against plummeting food prices. Police resorted to tear gas and water cannons to disperse the milk-spraying crowd. ¬About 2,000 dairy farmers from all over Europe gathered outside the European Parliament (EP) building, blocking traffic along several of Brussels' busiest streets.

The two-day protest, dubbed 1,000 Tractors to Brussels, was put together with a view to convincing politicians to take what its organizers call "efficient legislative measures" for the milk market.

"We have a European Parliament that hasn't made a move in years. We want new laws that will give insurance for our future," said Roberto Cavaliere from of the European Milk Board, which coordinated the protest.

To make their demands heard, farmers showered the EP's doors with milk launched from cannons. Despite even that, the demonstration was peaceful until farmers tried to storm the fence of the EP building. Police forces blocked their way, so the farmers switched the aim of the milk cannon against the police.

The first round of a milky battle finished with no casualties or arrests, but the demonstration is still going on as the dairy farmers plan to stay outside parliament until Tuesday

afternoon.

"Politics are really killing us. It has to change very quickly at the European level," said Belgian farmer Julien Husquet. "'The way it is going, we are in big trouble."

The farmers are demanding a 25 per cent increase in the retail prices of their products, which are now sold cheaper because of less international demand and increased competition. According to the European Milk Board, thousands of dairy farmers have been forced out of the market since 2009 — and if the bloc's agriculture policy remains unchanged, more risk losing their businesses. The EU's agriculture ministers are expected to meet to discuss reforms to the industry.