

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Polish Farmers Plow on to the Streets

Country: Poland

Post: Warsaw

Report Category: Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

On February 9, 2022, the AGROUnia farmers association and its members protested in 50 cities across Poland and called for government action to support farmers. AGROUnia may organize additional protests in Warsaw if their demands are not met.

On February 9, 2022, the agricultural organization AGROunia initiated a series of farmer protests in 50 locations across the country. The protesters drove tractors to smaller cities, mostly in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Łódzkie, and Lubelskie provinces, and slowed traffic by driving tractors on the roads. The protesters claim that the government is not addressing the current agricultural situation in Poland. They listed multiple problems farmers face: rising fertilizer prices, alleged uncontrolled imports of food, uncertainty related to the EU Green Deal, failure to regulate crop insurance costs, and the lack of government action to provide agricultural debt relief.

The farmers said they protested in cities to underline the fact that farmers' problems are also problems for people in urban areas. According to AGROunia, City dwellers will have to pay higher prices for food if farmers' concerns are not addressed and they have to pass on the cost of inflation and a decline in food production to consumers. Michał Kołodziejczak, the leader of AGROunia, announced that if the government does not adequately respond to the protests, then farmers will protest in Warsaw on February 23, 2022.

The AGROunia protesters received support from other farmers' organizations, namely the National Council of Agricultural Chambers, as well as the local representatives of the National Union of Agricultural Circles and Organizations.

Despite the protesters' demand to speak to the Prime Minister, neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of Agriculture decided meet with the farmers. As Henryk Kowalczyk, the Minister of Agriculture, explained the place for talks is in the ministry, not on the street. Nevertheless, during the press conference, Kowalczyk referenced many of the farmers' demands. He said the Polish government has secured appropriate funds to subsidize fertilizers, however, the ministry is still waiting for agreement from the European Commission. On the issue of the alleged uncontrolled import of food, the Minister emphasized that the government did not intend to close the borders to goods from outside Poland because this could cause a similar action in export markets. Although he did say that border controls are very thorough and do not allow imports of products not complying with EU requirements. Farmers also called for better regulation of crop insurance and Minister Kowalczyk underlined that state subsidies secured in the national budget, currently cover 2/3 of the costs of the insurance. With regard to reducing the farmer debt, Kowalczyk noted that the government has already drafted a law to provide significant debt relief for farmers, especially those who have these debts for many years, but the law needs to complete the legislative process. The draft legislation provides for the cancellation of interest and repayment of debt capital only by farmers.



Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province. The protesters' sign says "The government feasts and a farmer goes bankrupt"
Source: farmer.pl



Bydgoszcz, around 100 tractors arrived at the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Provincial Office. The protesters' sign says "We will not allow for the destruction of Polish agriculture"
Source: farmer.pl

Attachments:

No Attachments.