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Brexit: An open market has absolute priority - Farmers' president at the start of the International Green Week 2019

(DBV) On the occasion of the International Green Week in Berlin the president of the German Farmers' Union (DBV), Joachim Rukwied, expressed his concerns about the impending Brexit. The United Kingdom's departure from the EU is causing a great deal of uncertainty in the agricultural sector. "We still believe that an open market with the United Kingdom is a matter of the highest priority." Great Britain is an important market for German agriculture. Each year Germany supplies Britain with agricultural produce and foodstuffs with a value of around 4.5 billion euros. Germany's balance of payments surplus in its trade in agricultural products with the UK is in the region of 3.5 billion euros, which is also twice as much as the value of all its exports to the USA.

Rukwied is looking at the coming year with restrained optimism. "The upheavals in German politics, but above all in Europe prior to the elections, and not least of all Brexit could still have a serious impact on agriculture", according to the president of the Farmers' Union. Furthermore the trade war between the USA and China carries with it substantial risks, which should not be underestimated. "Uncertainty is unhealthy for markets and for businesses. The aim is therefore to safeguard Germany's position in certain areas of agriculture", Rukwied emphasised.

Current market data present a mixed picture: At the present time the price of milk remains stable. Arable farming is experiencing a lateral movement at an unsatisfactory level. And pig farming in particular is a matter of major concern to the president of the DBV. The livestock census conducted in November 2018 revealed that the number of pigs had declined to 26.4 million. At the same time the number of farmers keeping sows has continued to fall to its current level of 7,800. "Over the past 10 years the number of pig farmers has roughly halved. There is a danger that in future pig farming will no longer be viable in Germany", according to DBV president Rukwied.

At the opening of this trade fair Rukwied emphasised the importance of the Green Week for the entire industry. "The International Green Week provides a platform for agricultural policy at the start of the year and is also an ideal occasion for discussions with politicians and opinion-formers from all over the world." Moreover this is an outstanding opportunity for bringing consumers and farmers together here in the German capital.



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