

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Trade balance of agricultural and food products in deep red**

Germany's contribution to food security must be increased

Germany's contribution to securing domestic and global food supplies continues to decline. At a time of increasing uncertainty on the world markets, the often politically desired cuts in production in Germany, a favoured location for agriculture, are clearly having a further impact.

According to preliminary figures on German agricultural exports for the first half of 2024, the negative trend in the agricultural and food industry's trade balance that has been evident for many years is intensifying. German imports from January to June 2024 (excluding agricultural machinery) of 38.5 million tonnes were offset by German exports worth just 30.3 million tonnes. The long-standing record deficit for the first six months of this year is therefore already 8.2 million tonnes and has worsened by a further 16.6% compared to the same period last year.

'The competitive situation abroad and the battle for shelf space in foreign markets is getting tougher,' says Hartmut Kretschmer, spokesperson for the German Export Association for Food and Agriproducts GEFA e.V. (GEFA) and Manager Food Service Europe at DMK Deutsches Milchkontor GmbH. 'At the same time, domestic production is constantly being burdened with new and often useless bureaucratic requirements instead of finally initiating the urgently needed and regularly announced change in bureaucracy,' continued Kretschmer.

### **Industry needs to work more closely with politicians**

'Shifting production and value creation abroad helps neither the German location nor the environment,' says Jan-Bernd Stärk, Deputy Spokesperson of GEFA and Head of Export EU-East/Third Country, Westfleisch SCE mbH. German politicians must significantly increase their efforts to strengthen food production in Germany. In addition to cutting red tape, there is also a need to promote the export of agricultural products and foodstuffs. In this way, the industry's contribution to food safety in Germany and abroad can be significantly increased again. 'It is no longer acceptable for Germany, a favoured location for agriculture, to withdraw from its responsibility for a safe food supply,' adds Stärk.

The members of GEFA generally welcome all political efforts to open up markets and reduce trade restrictions. However, these are currently taking place too slowly. More committed initiatives to open up markets are required in order to open up opportunities for the sector in important sales markets. This applies, for example, to the conclusion of free trade agreements (Mercosur and in South East Asia) at EU level or bilateral agreements in Germany (e.g. veterinary authorisations in important third country markets). The reduction of bureaucratic obstacles in the case of complex declaration requirements or compliance with rules of origin in the food sector should also be mentioned.

GEFA is the comprehensive communication platform between politics and business. It sees itself as a central point of contact for all economic operators interested in food, beverages, agricultural raw materials or products from the intermediate input sector such as seeds, breeding animals and agricultural technology from Germany. GEFA's tasks include organising contacts for the companies involved worldwide.

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