

Losses are increasing due to its low purchase price and the increase in the price of fodder, so cows are being sold, which is why production is falling, so we should expect a shortage of that food product from September.

The owner of a cow farm in the village of Skorenovac in the municipality of Kovin, Dejan Trajković, said that the tanks of the dairy are empty and that the shortage of milk will be felt as early as next month. **“There is no milk because the smaller farms have been shut down, and the only ones left are the medium and large ones that cannot be closed easily because of the huge funds invested in the equipment,”** said Trajković for Beta. He added that the problem with the low purchase price of milk has been going on for two or three years and that he himself is thinking of putting a lock on the farm of 340 cows, of which 180 are milk cows, after 20 years.

As he said, the low purchase price of milk is to blame for the fact that today there are only about 180,000 milking cows in Serbia, while six or seven years ago there were 450,000 to 500,000.

“For the shortage of milk, the state and the largest dairy company ‘Imlek’ will be to blame, which bought ten of the biggest dairies in Serbia and behaved as it wanted, it did not increase the price of milk, but imported it, and now it has nowhere to go, so it is ‘running’ for with milk, increasing the price by a dinar or two because her purchase more than halved”, said Trajković.

He said that he stopped delivering milk to Imlek about fifteen years ago and now sells it to Granica dairy for 56 dinars per liter. “I’ll have hay in half a year, and after that I don’t know what I’ll do, I don’t have the money to buy it, and I won’t have it from anyone because, due to the catastrophic drought, it’s gone”, said Trajković.

He pointed out that, due to the astronomical prices of fodder due to the drought, the real producer price of milk should be around 120 dinars, so even the subsidy for milk of 15 dinars per liter, which the state recently promised for one quarter, after farmers’ protests, will not help to reduce production losses.

The owner of a cow farm in Nakov near Kikinda, Olivera Latinović, said that she invested a lot of money in equipment and robotization in milk production and that she covers the loss on that product thanks to the fact that she produces food on her own property, so instead of selling it, she uses it to feed the dairy cows.

“The monthly cost of feeding 100 dairy cows is about three million dinars, and for milk I get two, because a liter is from 30 to 60 dinars, depending on the dairy. Instead of selling agricultural products, I direct them to the dairy and thus cover the loss on that production “, said Latinović.

According to her, milk producers have been “under water” for a long time and cannot catch their breath.

“Not even the banks will grant us loans anymore because they put us in the risky category”,

said Latinović.

She added that the difficult position of milk producers was “finished” by the drought and that this year they had to set aside twice as much land under corn for preparing silage, but that despite this, it is of poor quality because there are no grains, but the stalk is empty.

According to her, the slaughterhouse industry has reduced the demand for fattening bulls these days because, due to the difficult situation, cheaper cows are being sold.

Milk producers have repeatedly asked for help from the state in order to force the largest dairies to increase the purchase price of milk, which has been around forty dinars on average for several years and is lower than the price of bottled drinking water, proposing various measures.

One of them was to calculate and prescribe the minimum producer price of milk that dairies must pay, but the state referred to the principles of market economy and illegal interference in business.

About two months ago, Serbia had to import powdered milk to ensure food supplies due to the fear of the escalation of the war in Ukraine, 021 reports.