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'We Are Fed Up': 35,000 Protest Industrial Agriculture in Germany



Farmers protest for more ecological agriculture in Berlin, Germany, January 19, 2019. | Photo: Reuters file

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Central concerns about current farming policy in the European Union are the alleviation of climate change and the endangering of species.

Thousands of [protesters gathered in Berlin](#) to demonstrate on issues related to industrialized farming in Europe and to demand policies that promote ecologically sustainable harvests and climate-friendly agriculture.

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Germany's Agriculture Minister Julia Kloeckner was called to action by thousands of protesters who had the message, that "farm work on the land, in the fields, and in the stables is something very valuable and worthy of protection."

The event organizers reported that 35,000 protesters converged in Berlin, including 170 of them who drove there in tractors from their farms, to call for climate-friendly agriculture and healthy food. The used the slogan "We are fed up with the agriculture industr."

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Subsidies are a key policy area ripe for "reorganization" They currently total US\$68 billion, including US\$7.16 billion in Germany, according to groups leading the protests.

Protesters claimed that these subsidies are misdirected, as they are aimed to boost companies' yields when they ought to be employed to "avert further farmyard closures and rural village die-offs," reported Deutsche Welle.

Another issue with subsidies is the uneven distribution between large companies and small farmers. The protest's spokesperson Saskia Richartz explained that Germany's 3,300 largest businesses receive US\$1.14 billion, while 200,000 farmyards, collectively, get US\$796 million.

The protest also aimed to reach consumer consciousness. "We have to get away from the day-to-day [habit] of cramming calories into us as quickly as possible, regardless of how they originated," said Green party co-leader Robert Habeck.

The event's 56 civil organizations reached a wide consensus on the importance of re-directing agricultural practices for the sake of tackling poverty and alleviating climate change.

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They hailed small-scale farming as more suitable to the life cycles of soil, plants, and animals. In terms of poverty, ecologically-based farming is an integral part of promoting development, according to a report titled "Bread for the World."

The protest took place in the context of the Berlin annual Green Week expo, which was attended by 70 agriculture ministers.

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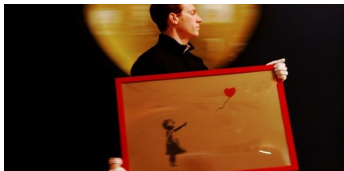
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