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Statement to World Food Day – Herbstkonferenz DEAB am 16.10.2026

When we look at the supermarket shelves, we see numerous products featuring images of very happy animals gazing at us from a pasture. There's talk of pasture-raised milk, pasture-raised cheese, and pasture-raised yogurt; absurdly, there's even "pasture manure" sold as fertilizer for horse pastures.
This shows us just how contradictory the perception of this topic is.

On the one hand, there's the realization among marketers that money can be made by capitalizing on a romanticized image of "pastures." Apparently, many people long for this idyllic world of animals grazing peacefully. This represents significant potential for our cause: we can reach a lot of people with our message!
Of course, the reality is quite different.

In Europe, the very agricultural subsidies that are particularly important for ecological pasture farming are on the line. The current trend is shifting back toward the traditional area-based payments, which benefit only the very large farms. The outcome of this debate is completely up in the air. What's clear is that the major agricultural associations have no interest whatsoever in small-scale pasture farming.

We must also acknowledge that pasture-based farming is in decline. For example, the number of sheep farms in Baden-Württemberg has dropped dramatically. There are now only about 110 full-time shepherds, while roughly 1,200 work in the sector part-time. This shows that support has already been far too low. Ultimately, these are public services that benefit us all. In our workshop this afternoon, we'll demonstrate just how significant these benefits can be. The impact of ecological pasture farming on biodiversity cannot be overstated.

The decline of pasture-based farming also shows us how far intensive, conventional agriculture has strayed from its roots. A modern high-yielding dairy cow would starve to death on a nutritionally poor pasture of high ecological value, even with a full stomach. Conventional dairy production is virtually incompatible with pasture-based farming. Another fact worth noting in this context: In Baden-Württemberg, only about 25% of dairy cows have access to pasture.
The lack of support ultimately reduces pasture-based farming to a "museum agriculture" for nostalgics and idealists who either don't need much money or already have enough. We must not allow this trend to continue.

So, to conclude, two points: first, the BUND's deep appreciation for the diverse work of pasture-based livestock farmers in Baden-Württemberg and beyond. Second, a clear call to policymakers and agricultural associations for long-term support of this farming method. Incidentally, this also contributes to the resilience of ecosystems in the face of climate change!