



WELCOME BACK... and welcome to 2018!

With the indulgences of the party season behind us for another year, the cold, watery light of the January morning seeps into the Eucolait secretariat and a brutal sense of the passage of time and the fleeting nature of a calendar year washes over us. We are now closer to 2025 than to 2010....

Existential angst aside, we really do have a lot to look forward to in the policy sphere in 2018, (depending on how you define 'looking forward to' something)!

When we consider the trade agenda, 2017 was a fairly good year to be honest. The EU Trade agenda appears to have freed itself from the U-bend blockage with which it has been accursed in recent times, with CETA entering into provisional application in September and an EU-Japan deal in the bag just in time for Christmas.

Looking into 2018, the smart money has to be on a focus on the Americas, with the modernised EU-Mexico talks nearly finished and with hopes relatively high for an EU-Mercosur breakthrough. 2018 also has potential for action with South-East Asia (ASEAN), with the now long-concluded EU-Vietnam deal potentially seeing the light of day and we will perhaps also see some developments in talks with Indonesia; nonetheless this could be speculation or perhaps we're guilty of projecting our 'wish list' into a prediction.

Brexit broke all our hearts in 2017 and while the year finished with some 'good' news (again, this will depend on your definition of 'good') the spectre of the 'grand divorce' will continue to haunt us into this year.

The green light has been given to move onto the much-lauded 'phase II' but the meat is not yet in the pie. The real prize, i.e. the talks on the future relationship between the EU bloc and its prodigal son will only get its precious mandate in late March. So we'll see daffodils before we see the 'good' stuff... (once again, let your own definition be the guide on this).

Back within the EU itself, 2018 is bound to be a year of CAP talks. Loads and loads of CAP. Whether or not we will see real, solid foundations of the future policy being laid down during this year is another story, but we are promised some heavy debate. Following the release of the Commission's communication in late 2017, a fine balance will have to be struck between maintaining a unified CAP and implementing policies which will actually deliver in the very diverse regions across the EU 27.

While it can never be argued that one single 'way' will work equally well for arid Mediterranean landscapes as for rain drenched, Atlantic backed fields and pastures, (not to mention sub-Arctic regions with their own challenges) the last thing most observers want to see is a complete 're-nationalisation' of the CAP.



European Association of Dairy Trade

Bringing the CAP debate crashing back even further to earth, the departure of the UK will also entail a substantial dent in the overall EU budget. In plainest terms, any new CAP will have to 'do more with less'.

So what does this all mean? The only certainty is that there will be a lot of discussion. Here's hoping for some results.

Happy New Year to everyone... it's sure to be interesting at least!

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