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Eucolait applauds the conclusion of the EU-UK SPS agreement

Eucolait welcomes the conclusion of negotiations for an EU-UK SPS agreement announced at the EU-UK summit on 20 November. The finalisation of the agreement is a long-awaited step towards smoother trade with the EU's closest trading partner.

Six years on from Brexit, the UK remains the main partner of the European dairy sector, with two-way dairy trade worth more than €6,5 billion in 2025. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement succeeded in keeping trade flows free of tariffs and quotas, but a web of non-tariff barriers was introduced, translating into significant costs, administrative burden, delays and uncertainty for businesses on both sides of the Channel. Despite the challenges, dairy trade volumes are catching up on pre-Brexit levels, the recovery reflecting the adaptability of businesses and the strength of their trade relationships. However, the overall numbers do not tell the whole story, as many commercial operations have become economically unviable or outright impossible because of Brexit. Examples include triangular trade, re-export and trade in highly perishable products.

Based on what has been announced, the agreement will significantly simplify trade and reduce costs by creating a common SPS area, covering notably rules on food safety, labelling as well as animal health and welfare. Key facilitations include the removal of export health certificates and of SPS border checks. Another important feature of the agreement is dynamic alignment which should ensure that new hurdles will not be created by diverging requirements down the line. Eucolait also welcomes the relative predictability provided by the termination clause which is meant to ensure that the agreement will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

For dairy businesses on both sides, the agreement will translate into considerably lower administrative costs, fewer checks, faster border procedures and a more predictable policy and trading environment.

Eucolait has consistently called for an ambitious SPS deal that removes needless friction without compromising high safety standards. We therefore congratulate the EU and UK negotiators on reaching this important milestone and look forward to the implementation of agreement on 1 April 2028.

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