

# World going crackers for British cheese and wine

As the UK tucks into cheese platters and pops bottles of bubbles this New Year's Eve, the UK cheese and wine industries are celebrating a decade of growth and innovation.

Both have grown from strength to strength, with the UK cheese export market now worth £675 million and 130% more English and Welsh wine produced in 2018 compared to 2017.

Over the past decade, English and Welsh wine has become one of the UK's fastest growing agricultural sectors, with [hectarage planted in Britain growing by 194% in the last ten years](#).

The industry has also raked in the accolades, with English Sparkling Wine producer Nyetimber winning the 2018 International Wine Challenge (IWC) trophy for Sparkling Winemaker of the Year – the first time the award has been granted to both a woman and a winemaker outside of the Champagne region.

With Wines of Great Britain (WineGB) predicting UK wine production will reach around 40 million bottles by 2040 – and with famed French Champagne houses Taittinger and Pommery buying land in England's south – the future continues to look bright for this burgeoning industry.

Cheese production in the UK increased steadily by 7% since 2015, with 465,000 tonnes of British cheese produced in 2018 alone. Whilst British Stilton, Caerphilly, and Wensleydale continue to be some of the UK's most popular cheeses, cheddar reigns supreme as one of the UK's top exports. In the US, UK cheese imports are worth £50 million, with 90% of UK dairy exports to the US being cheese. In China, demand for UK cheese is growing by 20% each year.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

One of the great opportunities of Brexit is the chance to expand exports of our world-renowned food and drink, and the growth of our innovative cheese and wine industries is testament to this.

As we prepare to leave the EU, we will always champion our fantastic farmers and producers, to ensure their produce continues to be enjoyed not only at special events such as New Year's Eve – but all year round”.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

The festive season really highlights the quality and innovation coming from businesses in the UK's agriculture sector. This is

evident in the growing demand in major markets such as China and the US.

Consumers around the world will be enjoying some of the best cheese and wine coming out of the UK this New Year's Eve and I look forward to seeing businesses like Belton Farm and Nyetimber make strides in new markets in 2020.

Chairman of Wines of Great Britain (WineGB), Simon Robinson, said:

The UK's traditional method sparkling wines have been gaining international recognition over many years now, and as our success continues, we anticipate even further growth overseas in the years to come.

Wine tourism in the UK is flourishing and we are producing some still wines which are earning their place on top wine lists. We are proud of the ongoing success of this industry and are looking to the future with confidence!

[The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board \(AHDB\) reports that the increase in popularity of UK cheese](#) is due to a growing demand for more natural and authentic dairy products.

As home to the International Cheese and Dairy Awards, the UK's cheese continues to win gold with Belton Farm, a family-owned cheese manufacturer based in Shropshire, dubbed the 'Supreme Champion' at the 2018 International Cheese and Dairy Awards.

Over the past year, total exports of UK food and drink reached a record £22.5 billion. As part of the ongoing Food is GREAT campaign, government and British industry are aiming to boost British trade in food and drink exports to £23 billion over 2020, and will continue to work with exporters to help them tap into new markets.