Trump, Putin and olives

The decision to impose tariffs on Spanish black olives by the Trump administration has affected the world on an international scale, giving rise to various situations.

Proof of this is that Putin (the president of the Russian Federation since 2000, except for the period 2008-2012, when he was prime minister by legal means), while having a relaxed conversation with John Bolton, the National Security Advisor of the US government, referred to the American coat of arms, where an eagle appears holding a parchment in claw and an olive branch in the other. Putin indicated that «the eagle has eaten all the olives.» It is not known whether this simile was used an indication that the United States could be left without the precious fruit, or if Putin meant that the US had «unfriendly interests», by saying that the lacking Spanish olives on the branch was proof of this.

Donald Trump, who is 45th president of the USA and has run the country since January 2017, started a self-protection campaign, one based on closed borders. True to his protectionist strategy, he responds to any call from national companies to give them an advantage over foreign ones. As a result, at the end of 2017 and in response to the demand of two companies in California, he approved a tariff for the importation of preserved black olives, known as Spanish-style olives. In 2018 this tax increased to 40%, which has led to a considerable decline in imports, and losses of

over 20 million euros to olive companies.
Although this border closure only affects the Spanish-style black olive by means of tariff imposition, under the justification of the incentives it receives at origin, in particular by the European CAP; the rest of the agri-food products, who are also beneficiaries of such aid, are in a state of alert because if they were to extend this measure, they would be seriously harmed. This being because the United States is one of the main importers and consumers of these products.

Also, the USA it does not currently have the capacity to satisfy domestic demand with its own production. Therefore, for the time being, it is not expected that this measure, promoted by two important American olive oil industries, will be extended to other products, such as olive oil; whose internal consumption is higher than 317,000 t, and whose production is around 15,000 t of olive oil.

Therefore, the US continues to depend on imports of extra virgin olive oil for its internal consumption. However, it should be taken into account, that the «international pantry» grows broader every year.