



## The News

**February 1<sup>st</sup>, 10am** ©

*by Emma Phillips*

A thousand tractors have descended on Brussels today from all over Europe as the farmers' protest reaches the European Parliament. The European Council of all 27 states is sitting, with Europe's leaders gathered, including Emmanuel Macron. Farmers are complaining about increased taxes and excessive European environmental standards. They also oppose the agreement with the trading bloc of countries from South America, Mercosur.

In France, farmers are keeping up the pressure as several road blockades will be going ahead today across the country. In particular, the motorways around Paris remain blocked as well as the roads leading to the Rungis wholesale food market. Yesterday, 91 people were arrested for walking into one of the market's storage areas. 79 farmers were taken into custody for causing damage.

Parents across the country are struggling as several schools remain closed today in the wake of ongoing teacher strikes. Teacher unions have prepared a 40% pay rate for those on strike, rising to 65% in Paris. There are demonstrations planned across France today. In Paris, a march will leave from Luxembourg to head towards the Ministry of Education at 2pm.

Gas prices will decrease from today, February 1<sup>st</sup> but other prices are set to rise, including an increase in electricity bills of between 8.6 and 9.8%. Some cigarettes will also increase by 50 cents. The LEP savings account interest rate drops to 5% while the A savings account remains at 3%.

And finally to tennis and the Open Sud de France which continues in Montpellier today. French players Arthur Cazaux, Constant Lesstienne and Grégoire Barrère all have matches in the second round today.