**Tariff-Free Trade essential to Protect Public from Price Rises**

* **Without tariff-free trade, UK consumers face higher prices from next year**
* **Average tariff on imported food will be over 20% if no deal is agreed**
* **BRC publishes “A Fair Deal for Consumers: Why Tariffs are Bad News for UK Consumers”**

The EU is the UK’s largest trading partner and the source of a huge amount of the goods we buy. Four-fifths of UK food imports originate in the EU and EU imports also play a key role in the supply chains for fashion, homeware, and other retail sectors.

The BRC launched its “A Fair Deal for Consumers” campaign last year to stand up for consumers everywhere and ensure households can enjoy the same great value in shops after Brexit. Its report, “Why Tariffs are Bad News for UK Consumers”, calls on the Government to negotiate a zero-tariff trade deal with the EU to avoid price increases for consumers.

In May, the UK published its [new tariff schedule](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-tariffs-from-1-january-2021), which will apply from 1st January 2021 if a deal is not agreed. Under the schedule, 85% of foods imported from the EU will face tariffs of more than 5%. This includes 48% on beef mince, 16% on cucumbers, and 57% on cheddar cheese.

Given the highly competitive nature of retail, cannot absorb all these increased costs, meaning the public would face higher prices from 1st January 2021. With the coronavirus crisis already having a major impact on consumer spending, it is more important than ever that Government agrees a deal that does not lead to price increases in shops and online.

Time is running out for both parties to reach an agreement on their future trading relationship and businesses will need time to implement new systems in time for January 1st 2021. The BRC is calling on Government to prioritise consumers and secure a deal that ensures no tariffs would be applied to good imported from the EU. Additionally, the deal must keep the impact of non-tariff barriers, such as new regulatory checks, as low as possible to maintain choice and availability.

**Andrew Opie, Director of Food & Sustainability ar the British Retail Consortium, said:**

“The next few months are critical to the living standards of millions of people in the UK. For decades, British households have enjoyed great value, quality and choice, making it a great place to shop. However, without a tariff-free deal with the EU, the public will see higher prices in supermarkets from January, squeezing millions of families already impacted by the current economic downturn. This is not the fair deal that consumers were promised.

“Many UK shoppers experienced disruption in the run up to lockdown; without a deal, the public may face an even bigger challenge at the end of the Transition period. With the clock ticking down to 31st December, the Government must put consumers first and agree a deal that avoids tariffs and minimises the impact of non-tariff barriers. This would prevent harm to shoppers, retailers and the wider economy.”

Notes

Download “A Fair Deal for Consumers: Why Tariffs are Bad News for UK Consumers”