

U.K: Retail group rejects government claims of no fresh food shortages under no deal Brexit

The British Retail Consortium has rejected government claims that there would not be fresh food shortages in the event of a no deal Brexit.

That claim was made on Sunday by Michael Gove, the British government minister in charge of preparations for that scenario.

The U.K. is currently due to leave the European Union on Oct. 31, and there is currently no agreement in place that will govern their relationship after that date. If it leaves without a deal, a plethora of laws will cease to apply overnight. Many predict this would lead to widespread chaos and disruption.

"It is categorically untrue that the supply of fresh food will be unaffected under a no deal Brexit," a BRC spokesperson said.

They said the retail industry has been "crystal clear" with the government over the last three years that the availability of fresh foods will be impacted as a result of checks and delays at the border.

"Indeed, the Government's own assessments showed that the flow of goods through the channel crossings could be reduced by 40-60% from day 1, as would the "availability and choice" of some foods," the spokesperson said.

"The BRC's own assessment has shown that soft fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries, tomatoes and lettuces, would likely see reduced availability as they are largely imported during the winter months."



The statement went on to say that while retailers continue to work with their suppliers to maintain stocks of non-perishable goods and plan ahead for any disruption caused by a no deal Brexit, it is "impossible to mitigate it fully as neither retailers nor consumers can stockpile fresh foods".

"The reality remains that a no deal Brexit in October would present the worst of all worlds for our high streets and those who shop there," the spokesperson said.

"Retailers will be preparing for Christmas, stretching already limited warehousing capacity, and the UK will be importing the majority of its fresh food from the EU, magnifying the impact of border delays."

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