Twitter Thread by Holger Hestermeyer



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It is time to talk Brexit and standards again. (thread)

> London intends to make use of its costly SPS regulatory autonomy. As widely anticipated, first area of divergence expected to take place in the field of Crispr technology for genome editing, area where the UK has long argued for a more liberal stance.https://t.co/btRoxU3saZ
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> — Emily Rees (@emilyrees_eu) January 7, 2021

Let's start off with: I don't think any trade experts are surprised by this. It is why the TCA did not do much on SPS. It is why the EU did not offer much on SPS. It is why the UK did not ask much on SPS.

But it also shows that the popular slogan "after Brexit we'll have the same standards as before, so why would anything change in trade" was wrong - and worse, it was purposefully trying to stifle a necessary debate.

And this leads me to the next point: I have no issue with changing the rules, I have a massive issue with how it is done. Here's what we should discuss:

The decisive question: What are the standards the UK as a country wants. To inform this debate, we need the following information:

1) Environmental impact of the various choices.
2) Economic impact of the various choices. This bit includes trade impact and here two issues come into play:

a) making trade with the EU more difficult
b) making trade with the US easier
Both of these points will include some complex assessments such as:

- with regard to the EU: SPS checks are already in place, to what extent will GMO divergence complicate things further / make things more difficult for non-GMO producers?
- with regard to the US:

are there actual agri benefits given the US is a large producer, will this create market opportunities for the UK - or just for the US on the UK market (so is there a problem with defensive interests)

are there benefits with regard to a possibly FTA?

Finally - h/t to @MorgenrothEdgar - what problems would divergence create with regard to the NI Protocol?

Let's hope the quality of the debate surprises me...