



**PRESS RELEASE
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US Tariffs and Food Standards Clash Stir Anxiety Across the UK Supply Chain

The UK's food security faces fresh challenges following the imposition of new US tariffs and renewed concerns over the potential import of chlorine-washed chicken and hormone-treated beef into the British market. The latest developments have reignited long-standing fears among UK farmers, food safety groups, and consumers about the future of food standards, transparency, and agricultural resilience.

The prospect of American meat products treated with controversial methods being sold in UK supermarkets has never sat comfortably with the public — and with good reason. These practices, common in parts of the US, are banned under current UK food safety regulations. However, recent trade discussions have signaled a shift in tone.

As part of ongoing negotiations to ease transatlantic tensions and secure broader trade terms, UK officials have quietly drafted proposals to lower tariffs on selected agricultural imports. While this may help defuse trade pressure from

Washington - particularly given the strong influence of rural states in US politics - the move is being seen as a potential weakening of UK food standards.

"Food security isn't just about quantity, it's about quality and trust," say Jill Maclean at the UK Food Council. "Allowing imports that fall below our current safety thresholds sends the wrong message to UK producers and undermines public confidence."

The situation is further complicated by global trade disruptions, rising inflation, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, all of which continue to stress the UK's food system. Farmers warn that being undercut by cheaper, lower-standard imports could devastate British agriculture, putting long-term resilience at risk.

Consumer groups and environmental advocates are also voicing concern. The reintroduction of chlorine - washed poultry into the conversation - once thought to be off the table - highlights the delicate balance between trade ambitions and food integrity.

Call to Action:

Policymakers, producers, and consumers must urgently unite to uphold the UK's hard-won food standards and ensure future trade deals don't compromise public health or agricultural sustainability. Now is the time to put transparency, safety, and sovereignty at the heart of UK food policy.

The UK Government has yet to issue a statement in response to the new tariffs or confirm whether chlorine-washed chicken could be permitted under any future trade agreement.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- Chlorine-washed chicken is banned in the UK under current food safety regulations.
- The new US tariffs were introduced on 2 April 2025 and apply to a range of food and agricultural products.
- The UK Food Council is an independent body representing the interests of consumers, producers, and industry stakeholders across the British food supply chain.

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