

Arbroath smokies hung out to dry by new EU trade deal2

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ARBROATH smokies, Scottish salmon, Scotch beef and Stornoway black pudding are among famous foods and brands at risk by a new European Union free trade agreement likely to be ratified this week.

The final agreement between the EU and Canada, backed by the UK Government, fails to protect any British produce because it is understood UK ministers have failed to add any to the free trade deal.

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Orkney cheddar, as well as the Cornish pasty and Cumberland sausages and Jersey royal potatoes, that enjoy EU protection are among other Scottish and UK brands that could be threatened by a wave of cheap Canadian versions.

Details of the final EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic & Trade Agreement show that while there are a host of products from other EU nations that are protected, from Gorgonzola cheese in Italy, Edam in Holland and Camembert cheese in France to Prosciutto ham and Munchener Bier in Germany, there are no British products listed.

Campaigners first brought the issue to ministers' attention two years ago, but the final agreement backed by the UK Government remains free of British produce.

Scotch Whisky already enjoys protection in Canada under the existing EU-Canada wine and spirits agreement.

Jean Blaylock, policy officer at campaign group Global Justice Now said: "Because the UK Government decided not to include any geographical protected status for foods in CETA, lamb, beef or salmon from Canada could be sold in the UK under labels of 'Orkney lamb', 'Scotch beef' or 'Scottish salmon' – terms that would otherwise have been restricted to Scottish products and supported local producers."

And Nick Dearden, director of GJN added: "It's too late to do anything now. It's a disgrace that the UK Government – unlike virtually every other government in Europe – has failed to protect these products."

The CETA deal, which will finally be voted on by the European Parliament on Thursday, will come into immediate effect in the UK, if as expected it passes.

While the UK remains in the EU and is negotiating the terms of the Brexit divorce it will be subject to the agreement's provisions.

A spokesman for Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), which promotes the red meat sector said: "The prevailing confusion about this matter is unwelcome.

"Clearly, it is very important the globally famous Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb PGI brands – among the first meat brands to receive PGI accreditation more than 20 years ago – are included in this agreement."

The Geographical Indications protections list, which identifies a product as originating from the EU, contains food products from the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Portugal, Holland, Cyprus, Sweden and Romania.

Other EU products protected include Parma ham, Parmesan Cheese, Roquefort cheese, Feta cheese and Bratwurst.

EU brands protected in the CETA agreement already have “protected geographical indicator”.

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