

Shopping for Brexit

When we first joined the EEC and the public by majority voted to stay in I used the common market as it was intended. I bought a German car and French wine. I went on family holidays in Spain, bought Danish bacon and Dutch market garden produce. I noted that the businesses I worked for usually traded globally but made little or no progress in selling to the continent whilst doing well in the Americas and Asia. I also watched as UK industrial businesses struggled against the competitive strength of many continental challengers, from German cars to Italian clothing and textiles.

As the EU and individual member states from time to time made statements and decisions which were clearly against the interests of the UK and its economy I started to change my shopping habits. First to go were the foreign cars. I have bought UK manufactured vehicles since the early 1980s. I replaced French red and white wine with English whites and Australian reds. More recently over the last decade or so I switched to an annual holiday in England rather than the continent. I give priority to English food products when I go to the supermarket. This summer it has been possible to buy salad items, vegetable and fruits entirely from English farms.

Every time someone from the EU threatens us as their idea of a good way to negotiate I check the labels on products more carefully in the local shops. There is plenty of scope for us to make and farm more of what we need at home, which is exactly what we will do were the EU to seek to impose farm tariffs on their trade with us.

I note that still no member state has said it wants to impose new tariff and non tariff barriers on their trade with us. One day perhaps the EU will get round to talking about how they can keep their great access to our market. Meanwhile they should not upset all their customers in the UK too much. I saw other shoppers checking the product origin labels carefully on my last visit to the supermarket.