

Viewpoint: How Europe's risk aversion has turned the continent into an agricultural backwater

With tariffs announced against Brazil and Argentina, and a threat against France, Donald Trump is dragging the world deeper into a damaging trade war. Largely unnoticed, the European Union is also in trouble at the World Trade Organisation for its continuing and worsening record as a protectionist bloc.

[A]t the WTO meeting in Geneva, India joined a list of countries including Canada, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and Malaysia that have lodged formal complaints against the EU over barriers to agricultural imports.

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The problem is that the EU bases its regulations on "hazard", the possibility that a chemical could conceivably cause, say, cancer, even Alcohol, for instance, is a known carcinogen at very high doses, though perfectly safe in moderation. The absurdity of the EU approach can be seen in the fact that if wine were sprayed on vineyards as a pesticide, it would have to be banned under a hazard-based approach.

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The EU has effectively banned genetically modified crops and has now ruled that even gene-edited crops (where no "foreign" genetic material is added) must be subject to the same draconian regulations. Crops produced by random bombardment with gamma rays, a less predictable process, are exempt

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