

The UK/EU Reset Paradox

The Threat to International
Trade and How to Fix It



Fresh Produce Consortium
(FPC) Insights



UK Imports of Plants, Vegetables & Fruit (2025)

■ EU ■ Rest of World





Brexit Timeline

The Policy Contradiction: Alignment for Alignment's Sake



The Premise:

To ease passage for EU goods, the UK proposes adopting the EU's strict, protectionist Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) control model.

The Consequence:

Adopting this model dismantles the UK's highly effective post-2024 risk-based border regime. By opening the door to the EU, we build a wall against the Rest of the World.

Replacing a Functional Regime with Imposed Friction

Dimension	Current UK Risk-Based Model	Proposed EU Reset Model
Biosecurity Logic	Risk based & scientific 	Rigid, blanket compliance 
EU Fresh Produce Impact	Zero border controls since Brexit	Frictionless trade with the EU is a myth as the EU/UK customs border remains
RoW Fresh Produce Impact	~5% physical inspections with 99.5% compliance 	Mandatory Up to 100% held for physical inspection 
Operational Outcome	Supply chain efficiency	Cascading labour and logistics bottlenecks compromise efficiency and drive huge cost

UK Government Soundbite Policy vs. Operational Reality

Government Claim

Businesses will save money

Produce reaches supermarkets
more quickly

Eases pressure on consumer
food inflation

FPC Operational Reality

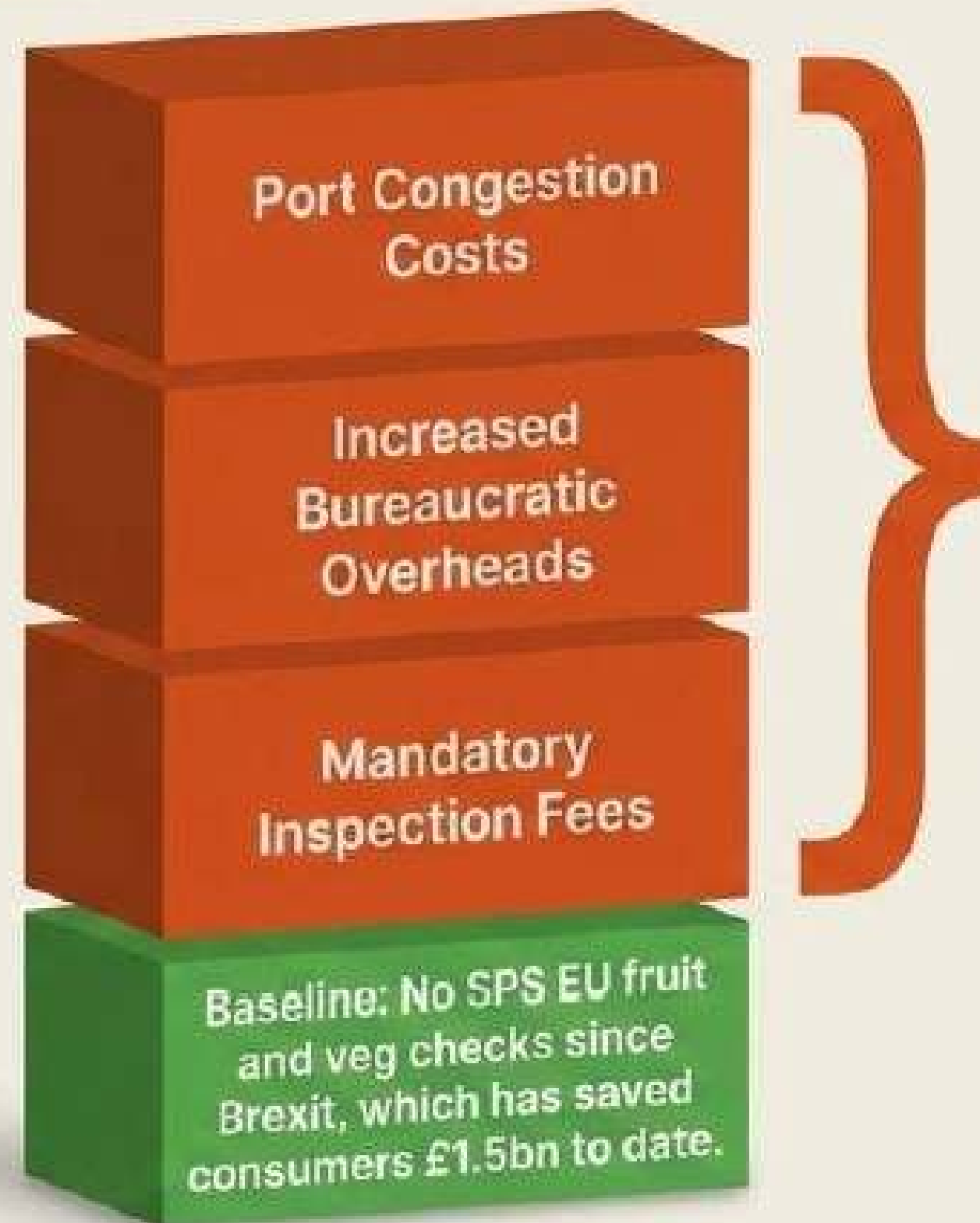
Imposes severe, unavoidable on-costs and acts as a tax by stealth.

Creates mandatory transit delays where none currently exist.

Acts as a vehicle of self-harm and drives UK food inflation.

Reality Check 1: The Tax by Stealth

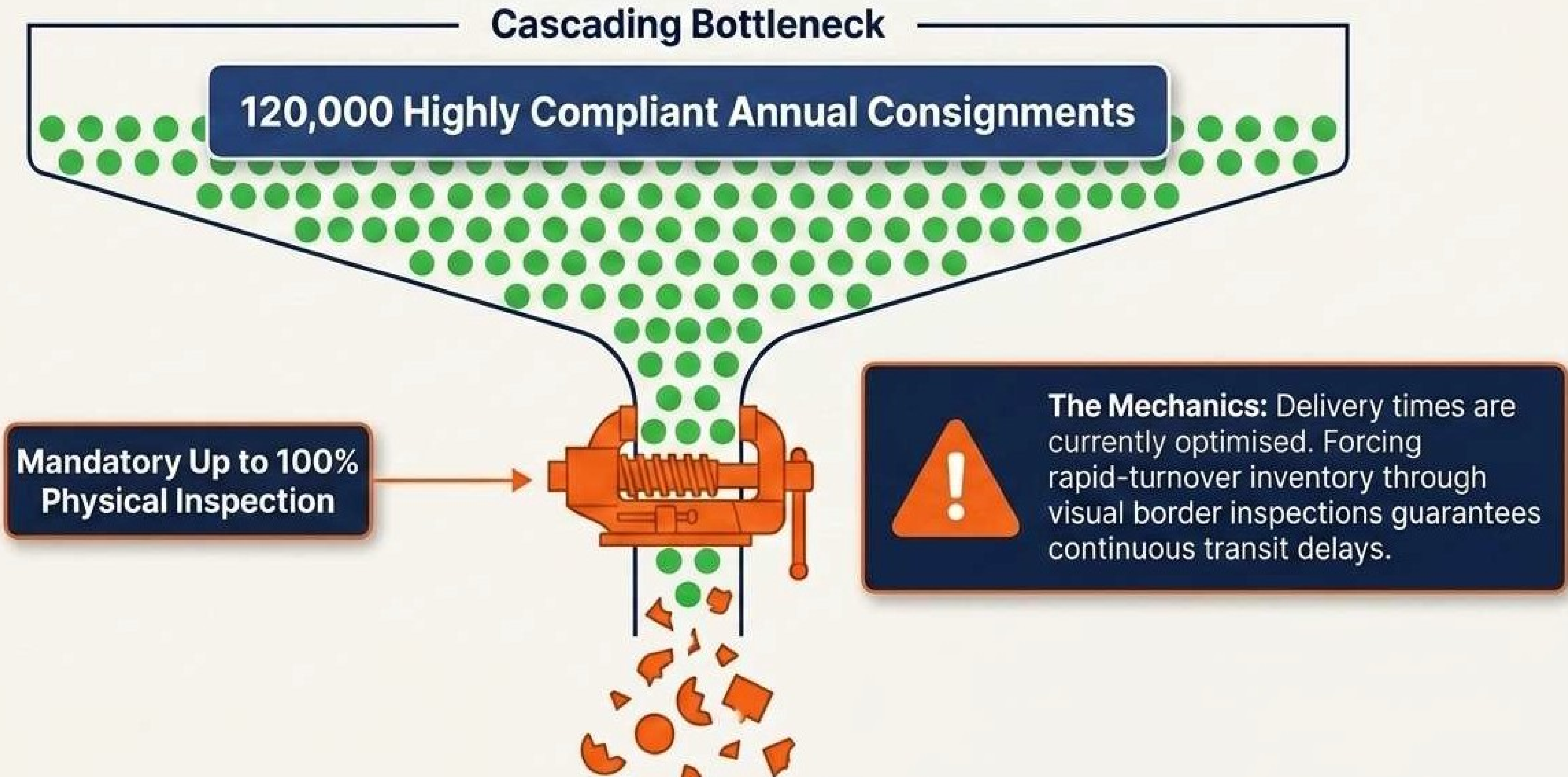
The Myth: Businesses will save money.



Envisaged oncosts of £300-400m per year imposed upon highly compliant operators importing from the RoW.

Reality Check 2: Creating Friction Where None Exists

The Myth: Produce will reach supermarkets more quickly.



Reality Check 3: A Substantial Additional Cost to Retail, Wholesale and Foodservice Prices

The Myth: The agreement will ease consumer food inflation.

Multiplier Effect

Direct Supply
Chain Costs

Government
Inspection Fees

Cost of
Ruined/Delayed
Produce

Case Study (Citrus):
Current State: 0% SPS checks required.
Proposed State: Highly likely 100% checks
required—for zero additional biosecurity benefit.



The Impact:
Financial penalties
of border gridlock
are passed
directly to the UK
consumer.

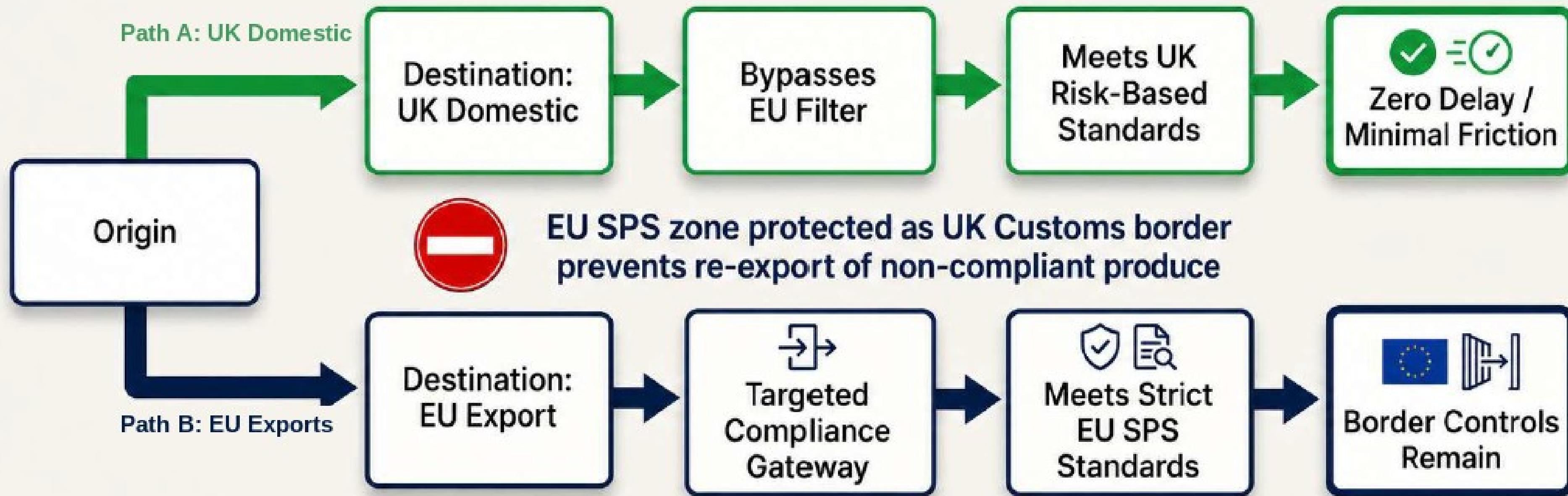
The Ignored Truth: Our Supply Chain Already Works

99.5%



- **The Core Metric:** Rest of World (RoW) imports subject to UK SPS measures currently achieve over **99.5%** border compliance across approximately **40,000** increasing to **120,000** annual consignments.
- **The Insight:** The UK fresh produce sector is an officially recognized low-SPS risk. We already enjoy a proven, proportionate, and highly effective biosecurity border.
- **Takeaway:** The EU reset is political alignment for alignment's sake, not science-based biosecurity. It will drive long-term food inflation for no consumer benefit.

Routing Logic Governed by Destination, Not Politics



The Benefit: It's a win-win solution, securing our national food supply without compromising the EU or RoW.

What Industry Needs Before Endorsing Any Deal



Formal acknowledgement of the unavoidable on-costs for RoW trading sectors.



Clarification of specific exemptions (e.g., retaining current SPS for UK-consumed produce).



Concrete strategies to protect vital RoW supply chains from becoming collateral damage.

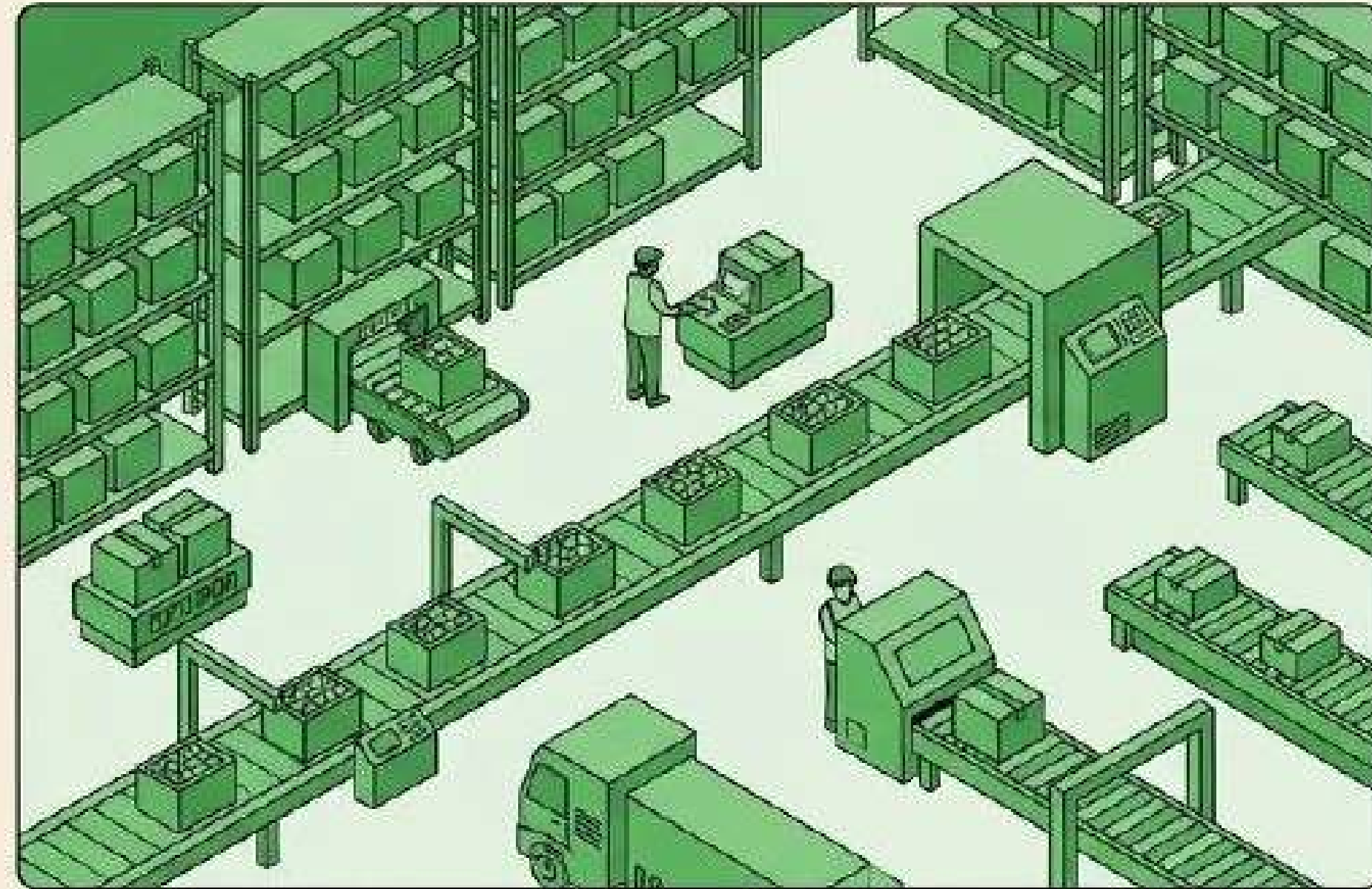
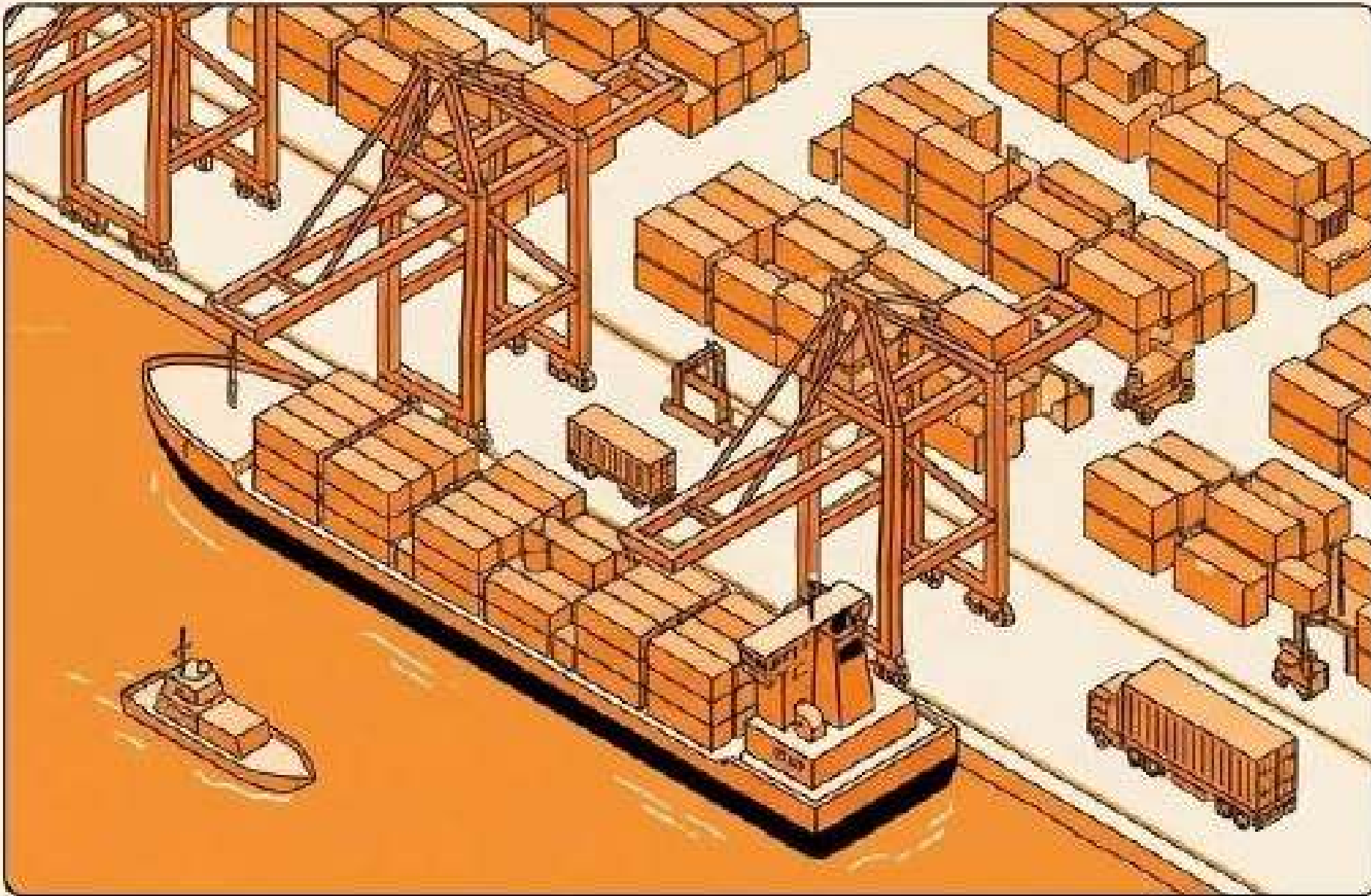


A realistic, phased roadmap for assessing supply chain impacts and transition measures.

A Genuine Reset Must Strengthen, Not Strangle, International Fresh Produce

Chaotic, Congested, High-Friction Trade

Smooth, Efficient, Frictionless Flow



The Verdict: The UK needs a reset with the EU. But wilfully importing border friction and dismantling efficient RoW supply routes is a direct act of economic self-harm. The fresh produce sector has proactively offered practical, proven solutions that maximise global trade. The question now is: Will the government listen?



RESET THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE GROWTH AND FOOD SECURITY



Rest of the world fresh produce key to feeding the nation



THE PROBLEM



No UK border inspections on EU fresh produce since Brexit = no cost saving



Minimal or zero SPS checks now. Will move to mostly 100% promoted by political ambition, not science



Up to 4 million tonnes of Rest of World produce affected



Around 50% of UK fresh produce imports



£300m+ added cost to the sector



Up to 120,000 consignments could face checks



**MORE DELAY. MORE WASTE.
MORE UK FOOD INFLATION.**



FPC'S SOLUTION



MAINTAIN the UK's science-based, risk-led SPS regime



Rest of World goods are highly compliant – checks can stay reduced or be removed



MAINTAIN current UK RoW SPS standards for domestic consumption only



These goods are imported to feed the UK – not for re-export



The UK customs border already prevents export of these goods into the EU zone



**SCIENCE FIRST.
NOT POLITICS.
A WIN-WIN RESET.**



THE OUTCOME



Mitigates Government-enforced UK food inflation



Protects the EU zone – RoW goods imported for UK consumption cannot be exported to the EU



Protects biosecurity



Keeps supply chains moving



Keeps produce available and affordable



Strengthens UK food security



**A WIN-WIN SOLUTION
PROMOTING VALUE AND
UK FOOD SECURITY.**



OUR BORDER POLICY MUST NOT PROTECT ONE ROUTE TO MARKET BY DAMAGING ANOTHER

Support the growth of the Fresh Produce Industry. Read the full operational response and engage with the consultation.



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