

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Prepare for environmental standards

From: Tom Rivett-Carnac, Financial Times
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Sir,

Alan Beattie's article on non-tariff barriers becoming more significant than tariffs ("Food safety clash gives taste of battle ahead", August 1) misses an important issue. While food standards are certainly significant, it is also highly likely that we will see the emergence of enforceable "environmental" standards in the coming years.

The current debate about biofuels is a case in point. The UK government is attempting to ensure that imported biofuels are only from sustainable sources but this effort is contrary to a World Trade Organisation ruling that prohibits discrimination on the basis of environmental impact.

This is a public scandal waiting to happen when it becomes known that the legally required biofuel content of our fuel may have come from cleared Indonesian rainforest. The resultant raft of standards will dwarf the complexity of food standards, and assessing whether they are genuine or not will be even harder.

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