

Cadbury builds stockpile in anticipation of Brexit chocolate shortage

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Chocolate company Cadbury announced that it has a plan to deal with the threat of a "no-deal" Brexit: a chocolate stockpile. Photo by: Pixabay/Public Domain

LONDON, England — Great Britain could have a chocolate mess on its hands.

British citizens voted to leave the European Union (EU) in 2016. The EU is a group of 28 countries in Europe that works together to cooperate in trade and other money matters.

Next year, "Brexit" begins: Britain is scheduled to exit the EU. It still hasn't reached a deal on how exactly this could happen.

If Britain leaves the EU without a deal, some experts have warned that there may be chaos at the borders and a shortage of key goods. One of those goods is chocolate.

Last week, the owner of the beloved candy brand Cadbury announced that the company has a plan to deal with the threat of this dreaded "no-deal" Brexit: a chocolate stockpile.

Hugh Weber is the president of Mondelez Europe, which owns the Cadbury brand. He told the Times of London newspaper that they hope British Prime Minister Theresa May can reach an

agreement to allow the free flow of goods with Europe. However, his company had a backup plan in case no deal is reached before the March 29 deadline.

Stockpiling Ingredients And Products

The company is preparing for Britain to fully leave. "We are stocking higher levels of ingredients and finished products, although you can only do so much because of the shelf life of our products," Weber was quoted as saying.

Weber added, however, that "the U.K. is not self-sufficient in terms of food ingredients, so that could be a challenge." In other words, the U.K. does not produce all the food products that it consumes.

U.S. company Mondelez has owned the Cadbury brand since 2010. Founded in Birmingham in 1824, Cadbury is perhaps the most famed chocolate producer in Britain. It's known for its Dairy Milk chocolate bars, as well as other favorites such as Creme Eggs, Crunchies and the Cadbury Roses chocolate selection.

It isn't the first time the chocolatier had warned about the possible effect of Brexit on its product. Last year, Glenn Caton of Cadbury's British operations said that the company may eventually face higher costs. Brexit would mean it loses out on more favorable trade deals with EU countries. It may have to charge customers higher prices or sell smaller products at the same price, Caton said.

Following the vote to leave the EU, the British government has consistently dismissed the possibility of a no-deal Brexit. In this case, the country would change back to old World Trade Organization (WTO) rules on its borders. The WTO is another trade group that includes 164 countries.

Trade Could Be Negatively Affected

The British press has warned of a "doomsday scenario" if there is no deal and rules change to WTO standards. There could be chaos and confusion at ports and land crossings, with days-long traffic jams and other delays, having a dramatic effect on trade.

The deadline is fast approaching and the government faces disagreements over how to approach negotiations with the EU. In turn, these warnings have become more urgent. Last month, it issued its first "technical notices" on how British citizens and businesses should prepare for the worst scenarios.

"Let me assure you that, contrary to one of the wilder claims, you will still be able to enjoy a BLT after Brexit, and there are no plans to deploy the army to maintain food supplies," said Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab. He refers to the famous sandwich because bacon, lettuce and tomato seemed under threat after the technical notices were released.

May reached a plan for negotiations on leaving the EU during a meeting at her official country house, called Chequers, in June. However, she has faced a backlash from members of her Conservative Party. The Conservative Party has a majority in Parliament, Britain's legislature. In other words, it has governing power.

Other Conservatives argue that the deal is too soft.

One former ally warned that up to 80 Conservative members of Parliament might vote against the Chequers deal. This could provoke a "catastrophic split" in the party, the official says.