

Britain's favourite fresh produce magazine since 1895



By Fred Searle

Wednesday 3rd July 2019, 10:15 GMT

## Tesco boss sounds Brexit deadline warning

Planning for 31 October leave date is more difficult because Christmas stock will leave less capacity to stockpile, says Dave Lewis



Dave Lewis

**P**reparing for the new Brexit deadline of the end of October will be "more difficult" because supermarkets' supply networks will be full of Christmas stock, Tesco boss Dave Lewis has warned.

In an interview with the BBC, Lewis said there will be "less capacity" to stockpile longer-life goods, which could prove problematic if there's a no-deal Brexit and tariffs and border delays disrupt food supplies.

In preparation for the initial 29 March deadline, Tesco had stockpiled various long-life items, but Lewis said it would be more challenging to make similar preparations for the revised deadline.

"We'll do whatever is practical depending on how things develop between now and then," he said. "But the challenge will always be those things which are shorter life: fresh produce. That's what the UK imports quite a lot of."

In a no-deal scenario, Lewis said the impact on shoppers – and the possibility of there being empty shelves in November and December – would depend on what no-deal means.

"If there's a problem at the border, if there's a problem with tariffs, then there could be interruption. If, as part of no-deal, there is no tariff, there

is no problem. We could be absolutely fine," he said.

Looking further forward, Lewis said he thinks Brexit could be a good time for the UK to rethink its food policy.

"It may be a good time for the UK to... decide, actually: what food do we want to eat, with what impact on health, with what impact on the environment," he said. "Having a food strategy for the country would be a very good outcome."