

Majorca Daily Bulletin

Sunday-Monday, March 3-4 2019

1.20€ · Founded 1962 · N.16838 · Passeig de Mallorca 9 A, Palma 07011

U.S. ambassador says don't let farming 'smears' stop trade deal

Britain should not follow the European Union's "Museum of Agriculture" and let false concerns over U.S. farming practices get in the way of a post-Brexit trade deal, the U.S. ambassador to London said yesterday. On Thursday, the United States laid out its objectives for a post-Brexit trade deal with Britain, seeking to entirely eliminate or reduce barriers

for U.S. agricultural products and streamline regulatory differences. Opponents of Brexit have argued that such a U.S. accord would open up Britain's markets to the likes of chlorine-treated chicken and genetically modified crops, while ministers have said the government would not lower food standards to win trade deals. "You have been presented with a false choice: either stick to EU

directives, or find yourselves flooded with American food of the lowest quality," Ambassador Woody Johnson said. "Inflammatory and misleading terms like 'chlorinated chicken' and 'hormone beef' are deployed to cast American farming in the worst possible light. It is time the myths are called out for what they really are: a smear campaign from people with their own agenda."



Piece of London in Majorca: P6-7

Spain takes steps to cap rents as election nears

The Spanish government this week adopted a decree that aims to cap residential rent rises within the term of a contract ahead of a general election in April.

The decree will enter into force in the next few days but will need to be endorsed by parliament later.

Although Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialists are in a minority government, the measure is likely to pass with the support of the anti-austerity party Podemos and pro-independence Catalan parties.

Residential rents have risen around 50 percent since 2014, but some say this has more to do with a lack of supply than excessive rent increases.

Under the decree, tenants would be entitled to stay in a flat for a minimum of five years, instead of the current three, and for seven years if the owner is a com-

pany. The new bill could hurt institutional investors such as Blackstone, which currently holds the biggest home rental platform in Spain with 20,000 flats under management.

"It is a very restrictive regulation in comparison with our European counterparts and it would add more upward pressure to price rises in the market and a reduction of the offer," said Claudio Boada, Blackstone's senior adviser in Spain.

The government also adopted a decree to extend paternity leave progressively over the next two years, another measure that could prove popular with voters. Optional paternity leave will be extended from the current six weeks to eight this year, to 12 weeks the following year and to 16 weeks in 2021.

Surveys indicate the Socialists will win the most votes in the election, but fall short of a parliamentary majority.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW IN MAJORCA: SEE PAGE TEN INSIDE