Chickens slaughtered in the United States, claim officials in Brussels, are not fit to grace European tables.

No, say the Americans: our fowl are fine, we simply clean them in a different way. These days, it is differences in national regulations, far more than tariffs, that put sand in the wheels of trade between rich countries.

It is not just farmers who are complaining. An electric razor that meets the European Union’s safety standards must be approved by American testers before it can be sold in the United States, and an American-made dialysis machine needs the EU’s okay before it hits the market in Europe.

As it happens, a razor that is safe in Europe is unlikely to electrocute Americans.

So, ask businesses on both sides of the Atlantic, why have two lots of tests when one would do?

Politicians agree, in principle, so America and the EU have been trying to reach a deal that would eliminate the need to double-test many products.

They hope to finish in time for a trade summit between America and the EU on May 28th.

Although negotiators are optimistic, the details are complex enough that they may be hard-pressed to get a deal at all.

Why? One difficulty is constructing the agreements.

The Americans would happily reach one accord on standards for medical devices and then hammer out different pacts covering, say, electronic goods and drug manufacturing.

The EU, following fine continental traditions, wants agreement on general principles, which could be applied to many types of products and perhaps extended to other countries.

The phrase means something like ‘make it difficult for rich countries to trade with each other’.

We usually ‘oil the wheels’ to make something work better; the opposite will happen if you ‘put sand in the wheels’ instead.

A European electric razor must be approved by American testers before it can be sold in the States, and in the same way, an American dialysis machine must receive EU approval before it can be sold in Europe.

They may be hard-pressed to get a deal because the details are so complex.

The author’s main argument in this text is that it would be good if rich countries like the U.S.A. and the countries of Europe could agree on and standardize their regulations regarding the standard, quality, and safety of items that they grow or manufacture.

Our fowl are fine, we simply clean them differently / with a different method.

It is not only farmers who are complaining.

They hope to finish ahead of a trade summit between America and the EU on May 28th.

We simply clean them differently.

I think they went this way.

I bought an evening paper on my way home.

In a way, I think you may be right.

Could you move that step ladder, please? It’s in my way.

The house next door has been sold.

The flat upstairs is for sale.

I bought this coat quite cheaply in the sale.

I’ve been asking for a reasonable amount for my car, but it’s still unsold.

I was on time for my appointment with my dentist.

In times like these, people become cautious about spending money.

I’m glad I didn’t live in the Middle Ages.

In those times, people died young.

Fortunately, I was just in time to catch the last train home.

I missed the celebrations in Hong Kong. I was in Singapore at the time.