

Crop Report

Wednesday 14th May to Wednesday 21st May

Get the insight you need to plan more effectively and manage your menus with our latest report from the field, brought to you by our expert produce team.

Berries



We are starting to see the first berries of the British season, with strawberries and blackberries arriving in line with the good weather. Raspberries should start to join the other berries either at the end of this week or beginning of next.

While we transition to the UK, we are likely to see some minor quality issues with the end-of-season berries from Spain. However, we are working hard with suppliers to keep these to a minimum and additional checks and procedures are in place throughout the chain, including packing and dispatching on the same day.

We expect to move to fully British supply on strawberries and blackberries from next week.

Lemons



There has been a three-week delay to the start of the core South African season, due to some heavy rains and severe flooding. This has put additional pressure on an already difficult end to the Spanish season, and been further exacerbated by some vessel delays.

We anticipated these problems and have been building stocks, as well as loading additional Spanish product to try to compensate for the lack of Southern Hemisphere lemons, which has helped maintain availability.

However, it is likely to be a very difficult two weeks while we await the arrival of South African produce and concessions are in place to help maintain availability, including on pre-packs.

Melons



We have transitioned to Almeria two weeks earlier than we would have expected to. This has addressed the availability problems caused by the weather-related premature end of the Central American season.

This is generally one of the most challenging parts of the year and there may be further problems as we move to Murcia in mid-June, where planting was delayed by heavy rains. We are maintaining a close watching brief on this.

British Basil



Outdoor-grown British basil is now in season and available.

British Chives



British chives will not be available until June, following some issues with our vertically farmed supplier. Until the start of the traditional chive season at the beginning of June, produce from Morocco will be available.

Passion Fruit



Storms and heavy rain in Colombia have led to the destruction of a significant part of the crop. This means that we will have to rely on produce that is air-freighted from Kenya for the next month or so.

Parsnips



We are approaching the end of the British parsnip season and will transition to Spain around 26 May.

We are pleased to report that the seasons are currently lining up well. However, we are maintaining a close watch on the Spanish crop, as there may be some problems caused by the heavy rains during the growing period.

Lettuce



The UK season has now started, helped by the warm weather. British Little Gem started last week, with Cos and Iceberg available this week.

The early season British crop is being supported by some Spanish produce, but this will finish shortly.

Sweet Potatoes



There are no current availability issues, although the American harvest is around 40% down on a standard year.

While Egypt is now coming to a close, this is later than expected and the new season is expected to start earlier than usual.

While we await the Argentinian season, which is looking more positive than had previously been expected, we are procuring produce from Portugal.

CauliShoots®



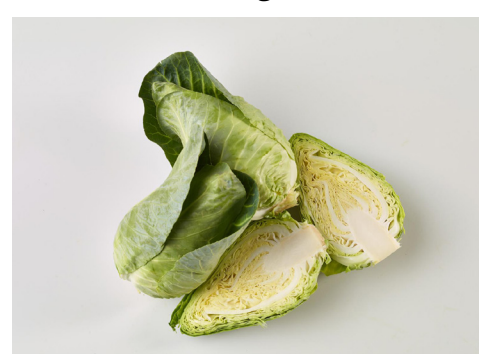
We are expecting the British season to start in June and are currently awaiting an official date.

Prepped Potatoes



We have seen some quality issues on prepped potatoes. We are investigating these with the supplier and have been taking steps to remove the affected stock.

Sweetheart Cabbage



We are approaching the end of the Spanish season. However, there are no major supply problems and we have already started to receive our first British sweetheart from Lincolnshire.

Asparagus



The much-loved British asparagus season is running well, with good quality and availability. The crop is expected to be available until around the traditional finish of 21 June.

Cauliflower



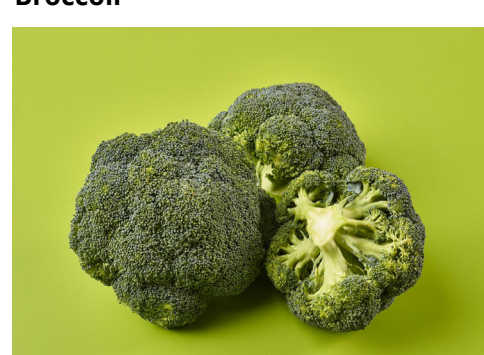
Supporting our British supply with some Spanish produce over the winter worked very well. However, as we move into the UK summer season, we no longer need that back-up supply and from next week, all cauliflower will be British.

Savoy cabbage



Concessions remain in place for Savoy cabbage as we utilise stored produce. The quality is such that additional leaves need to be stripped away making the product smaller.

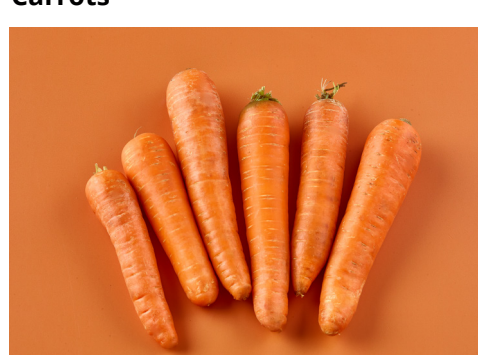
Broccoli



There are some ad hoc quality challenges as we approach the end of the Spanish season. These are the result of the heavy rains that we saw earlier in the season.

We will begin the move from Spain to the UK towards the end of May.

Carrots



We are expecting the new season for British carrots to start at the beginning of June. For the current season, the great news is that availability of standard carrots is such that we can remain British for the entire year - the first time in four years that this has been possible.

Until we reach the new season, we are advising customers to keep carrots stored at as low a temperature as possible, which will help to maintain shelflife and minimise any end-of-season quality issues.

Grapes



As is normal for the time of year, there will be a short pause in the availability of Sable and Cotton Candy grapes as the Chilean season ends around mid-to-late May. This will last until we see the first arrivals of Egyptian and Spanish fruit around mid-July.