

CROP REPORT

Wednesday 25th September to Wednesday 2nd October

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.

Leaf



Over the next month or so, we will slowly transition from the UK to Europe.

In the meantime, we are working with our suppliers to try to mitigate the impact of the recent heavy rainstorms on the spinach harvest, which had to be halted at the weekend as the product was too wet to pick. Weather-permitting, harvesting should return to normal early this week and, in the meantime, we are working with suppliers to source additional supplies.

We are expecting the heavy rain to have an adverse impact on lettuce, and we will be working with British and Spanish growers to try to ensure that any problems do not have a major impact on the seasonal transition.

Mushrooms




Compost issues are being experienced by a large number of growers across the UK and Europe. This is due to the compost failing to get down to required temperature, which is burning the mycelium once that has been added, ultimately resulting in lower yields.

We are working with suppliers to try to recover the crop as quickly as we can. The third flush, which is the smallest, has already been removed, but it will take a couple of weeks before this delivers a positive outcome.

In the meantime, we will continue to try to minimise the impact on customers by moving deliveries to maximise picking and availability; utilising concessions on flat mushrooms; and taking product from additional sources.

Tomatoes



This is traditionally a more difficult period with weather variations causing problems for growers.

While quality and shelf-life remain satisfactory, the weather means that yields are lower. We are currently managing this well, but it will remain challenging until Spanish produce starts to become available in mid-October.

There have been some specific issues with cherry on the vine tomatoes and we have introduced some concessions to allow a larger size over the next week, as well as sourcing supplies from additional growers.

Green grapes



The hot summer weather across southern Europe has caused some discolouration to the crop. This is not impacting the quality or taste, but we have put a concession in place to allow for some slight colour on green grapes to maintain availability.

This will remain in place until November, when we move to Peruvian produce.

Potatoes




Harvesting is continuing, and we expect good availability for the time being.

However, we do anticipate that there will be more problems this season with potatoes, in particular salad/mid potatoes, where there was no carryover and sales are high, and larger bakers, which have been affected by a reduced growing period following weather-related delays and lower plantings.

A fuller update on the season is expected in November by which time the majority of the crop will have been lifted.

Strawberries



We are working to minimise the impact of the recent cold spell on strawberries, which has dramatically affected the colour of the fruit on the plants. This has been exacerbated by an increased period of humidity, impacting quality.

We have managed to maintain availability through this challenging period, but as it is unlikely to improve, we are looking at contingency measures including moving to glasshouse and heated tunnel production earlier than anticipated and bringing forward the import period.

Green beans



We continue to take steps to avoid any major supply concerns following the heavy rain which caused some quality rejections. Working with our suppliers, we have added additional checks and have supplemented any shortages with pre-graded Dutch stock.


We anticipate moving to Moroccan supply next week, which should solve any remaining problems.

Oranges and Lemons



We have taken some proactive steps to manage the availability of oranges and lemons as we approach the end of the South African season. As anticipated, the poor weather early in the season has impacted the end of season fruit and we have introduced concessions to allow smaller fruit and ensure that we maintain availability until we move to Spain in November.

Watermelons



We have a concession in place to help manage the early season Brazilian crop, which has been affected by some shipping delays and problems with white fly affecting the crop.

The market remains tight, but we expect it to ease in the next couple of weeks as the season gets into full swing.

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