

Crop Report

Wednesday 21st October to Wednesday 28th 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.

Transport Spotlight



There are currently transport strikes in Italy, which could delay produce from that area over the coming days. The well-documented civil unrest in Europe could also add some additional complications and we are working with our logistics partners to try to minimise the impact on customers.

Limes



Brazilian supply continues to face significant disruption due to severe shipping delays, which are still affecting programme movement and overall availability. Suppliers are bringing in additional fruit from alternative origins to help bridge gaps, but market volumes remain extremely limited and are expected to stay under pressure in the short term. Periods of shortage are likely until new fruit arrives and schedules stabilise.

We are working closely with suppliers and logistics partners to maximise continuity wherever possible, but conditions will remain challenging until fresh arrivals begin to ease pressure and restore more reliable flow through the supply chain.

Tomatoes



The market remains difficult as supply transitions away from the Netherlands and into new season crops. We are seeing some easing within our own supply chain thanks to strong grower support in challenging conditions, but overall pressure remains high.

Plum, beef and cherry tomatoes continue to face significant strain, and these lines are likely to stay difficult over the coming weeks as programmes move into winter. We are working closely with suppliers to minimise disruption and protect customer availability, but conditions will require careful management through the transition.

Aubergines



Availability is improving slightly, but both supply and quality will remain under pressure for the next couple of weeks. Crops are showing shorter shelf life and more visible quality challenges, and these issues are expected to persist in the near term. Suppliers are working closely with us to support continuity, but conditions are likely to stay difficult until new season production begins in early November.

Brassicas



Produce is generally in a much better position following improved growing conditions over recent weeks. However, some challenges remain, with crops tending to come through on the smaller side of specification and pest pressure still affecting certain lines. Cavolo nero is currently the most impacted, with pest damage significantly reducing available volumes. We are working closely with suppliers to source additional product, but gaps are likely as pressure continues.

Lemons



While there are no current availability issues, quality concerns on South African lemons remain, particularly on smaller sizes, as the effects of earlier flooding are still influencing crop performance across the main growing regions.

To support continuity and improve quality, we are maximising supply across our grower base and bringing in additional volume from Argentina to reinforce the smaller lines. We have agreed a slightly earlier start to the Spanish season, which will add stability as the transition approaches.

Lettuce



The transition to Spain is well under way, with first deliveries already arriving. It is still very early in the season, so volumes are not yet at full capacity. While some UK availability remains, this is a tricky period, where short term challenges may occur on Little Gem and Cos as the changeover progresses. Iceberg volumes remain stable, and we are working closely with growers to minimise disruption and keep programmes running smoothly.

Spotlight on...British Beetroot



You can't beet British! Our British beetroot is grown in Wiltshire and is harvested during late summer. It grows and stores well, meaning that we can enjoy great British produce all year round.

Strawberries



Availability remains satisfactory as we transition to Dutch supply, with British volumes naturally declining in the colder weather. However, the short Netherlands season is expected to finish earlier than usual, creating a gap before the Moroccan season is ready. This is likely to result in significant market wide shortages. To maintain continuity, we will be sourcing additional volume from the United States to support availability until Morocco is fully up and running.

Peppers



Dutch growers are still managing the effects of earlier poor growing conditions, and supply remains tight across the category. Red and green peppers are holding up, but yellow remains the most constrained line. Fruit is generally smaller, and growers are relying on earlier colour picks to keep product moving and protect shelf life. Class 2 fruit is showing better resilience and is supporting availability while Class 1 remains limited. As the industry moves into the winter season, the market is expected to stay challenging, with sizing, quality and overall availability requiring close management.

Potatoes



This year's potato crop is one of the most challenging in recent years. Poor summer conditions and lack of water limited growth. While the picture is not universal, for example, Scotland, where growing conditions were improved, has fared better than other regions. However, the overall result is that larger baker sizes, particularly 40s and 50s, will be in short supply throughout the season. Smaller sizes, including 60s and 80s, show stronger availability. With limited larger stock, we strongly advise customers to switch to smaller sizes for consistent supply.

Eggs



Salmonella issues in imported eggs have been well documented over recent weeks, and foodservice has been noted as the source of the outbreak. Please be reassured that all eggs sold by Fresh Direct are produced in the UK to British Lion Quality standards.

News in Brief:



Asparagus remains under pressure, with El Niño disrupting development, and ad hoc air freight is being used to protect quality, but overall availability will stay tight until field conditions stabilise.

Blueberries are now fully transitioned to Peru. Volumes and quality are satisfactory, but some concern about the potential impact of El Niño towards the end of the year and into 2027.

Ginger - currently, some ginger is coming from Brazil, which has a natural, slightly blue tinge. This is perfectly normal for the region.

Melons - There is a higher proportion of larger fruit still coming through on melons. Cantaloupe remains the most affected and a concession is in place to support supply.

Raspberries - There is limited British stock remaining, as we transition to Moroccan fruit. The changeover is moving well, with no major cause for concern.

Red and white cabbage will have market-wide availability challenges until the new season.