

CROP REPORT

Wednesday 9th October to Wednesday 16th 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.

Mushrooms



We are continuing to work with suppliers to try to minimise the impact of market-wide shortages on mushrooms.

As such, we have already taken a number of steps, including managing the crop to remove the third flush; maximising picking and delivery schedules; sourcing product from other origins; and utilising concessions on flat mushrooms.

We have also been sourcing product from various suppliers to ensure we maximise availability.

We are expecting market-wide shortages to last for the next couple of weeks as growers continue to recover from the compost failing to get down to required temperature, which is burning the mycelium once that has been added, ultimately resulting in lower yields and availability.

This is impacting Class 2 product particularly hard.

Broccoli



It remains challenging for farmers hoping to harvest the remaining brassica crop. The very wet weather is causing market-wide availability issues, although we are continuing to work with suppliers and have managed to avoid major shortages, with only some minor issues to date.

There has been the occasional weather-related quality issue, which has caused some yellowing on broccoli.

We continue to monitor the situation closely as we close in on the end of the season and plan the transition to Spain.

Citrus



As we approach the end of the South African season, we are working to minimise the impact of the poor weather conditions earlier in the year.

In order to maintain availability, we are introducing some size concession on medium oranges and prepack lemons. Taking these proactive steps should allow us to manage supply until the arrival of the Spanish season in November.

We are also working to extend South African easy peelers for a few more weeks, as the Spanish Satsuma variety is giving some early season quality concerns. We believe that South African Nardocott variety will provide a better quality product, albeit that we will require a small size concession to maintain availability.

Potatoes



Potato availability is improving.

However, harvesting is behind, particularly in Scotland, where only a small proportion of the crop has been started, which is likely to be the result of growers leaving the product in the ground to increase the size of the potatoes.

Overall, the crop looks similar to this year, albeit the shortages are potentially across the board rather than on specific varieties. As previously reported, we expect small/salad potatoes to be hardest hit and the biggest challenge this season.

Lettuce



The wet weather is impacting availability of lettuce. Iceberg has been a particular issue, although we have managed to cover this by substituting with smaller sizes.

Also finishing early because of the weather are Continental varieties. However, we are expecting our first deliveries from Spain this week, which should ensure that there are no major availability issues.

Salad



Market supply of salad produce is very tight, particularly for aubergines and tomatoes, following the high levels of production between May and August. This is likely to cause some market challenges through the rest of October.

On tomatoes, 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.

Strawberries and raspberries



Both of these fruits have been affected by the cold weather, which has had a dramatic impact on both the quality and quantity of the fruit.

In order to address the resulting availability challenges, we have started to import much earlier than anticipated, moving to Dutch product around a month ahead of planned timing for strawberries.

For raspberries, we have started to see some of the Moroccan harvest this week, which should hopefully mean that the issue will shortly come to an end.

Green grapes



There are no availability issues on green grapes, but we are seeing some quality issues as a result of the extreme summer temperatures in southern Europe.

This is not impacting quality or taste, but a concession will remain in place until November when we move to Peruvian produce, to allow for some slight colour on green grapes so that availability can be maintained.

Sweetheart cabbage



We are working with suppliers to minimise the weather-related challenges on sweetheart cabbage, which has caused some short-term issues.

As sweetheart cabbage normally transitions to Spain earlier than other brassicas, we are expecting less of an issue with this crop.

Watermelons



We are keeping concessions in place for the next couple of weeks, while we manage some challenging early season availability from Brazil.

The initial crop has been affected by some shipping delays and problems with white fly affecting the crop, but we are expecting this to ease shortly, once deliveries start to arrive.

CauliShoots



We are seeing some excellent end of season availability on British CauliShoots. However, we will shortly be transitioning to Spain, which is slightly behind schedule. We are working with growers to try to bridge the gap.

Green beans



There have been some delays to the Moroccan season, which had been expected to start last week. We now anticipate this starting at the end of this week, but we will continue to use produce from Holland to mitigate the issues and maintain good availability in the meantime.

Red cabbage



This season has been marked by poor yields on red cabbage, but we have identified additional suppliers to ensure that we maintain good availability through the remainder of the season. The overall market, however, remains very tight.

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