

# CROP REPORT

Wednesday 15th November to Wednesday 22nd November

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.

## Broccoli



With the British harvest having now finished, largely due to the lack of quality product available following the recent storms, the UK is now reliant on Spain/EU for its broccoli imports.

As Spain is only on its second week of supply, availability is still a challenge. However, we are seeing week on week improvements on product availability and, although the next week will be extremely difficult, these shortages should be relatively short-term.

We continue to work with our suppliers to obtain as much supply as we can, including speeding up deliveries from Spain.

## Lettuce



There are some ongoing issues with lettuce, with the product continuing to struggle for weight.

Cos and Little Gem are still suffering from some damage that was caused by the high winds that were experienced across Spain and, while growers are working to remove the worst of the damage, they cannot remove it all, given the weight issues the product is also facing.

We are seeing some particular issues with 5kg iceberg and are currently using substitutions for this.

Continental varieties are the most difficult with limited availability, although we hope to see some improvement either at the end of the week or early next. Unfortunately, supply will be challenging until then.

## Oranges



We are expecting Spanish supply to begin this week, quality dependent.

The Spanish crop is looking likely to be around 30% down on last year's levels. There are some issues with greening as a result of the hot weather and we expect this to be a challenge for the next month.

We anticipate sourcing supply from Egypt in January.

Early Spanish Satsumas are proving very difficult with greening and limited shelf life, so we are utilising other origins, particularly South African Nardacotts, until Clementines become available towards end of the month.

## Cauliflower



The continuing wet weather is a major challenge for growers, leading to quality and availability issues. As a result, we have some concessions in place for both size and some pepper spots, which will help to maximise availability.

We expect this week and potentially next week to be very difficult, depending on the weather conditions, but hope to see some improvement after that.

## Tenderstem broccoli



As a result of the current weather conditions, British Tenderstem crops are either finished or coming to an end. As Spanish product is not yet fully available, there are some short-term market issues.

We are currently working with growers to mitigate the issue and identify additional supply from other origins both within the EU and from Africa. However, it is likely that the next couple of weeks will be challenging.

## Tomatoes



We expect the recent issues with tomatoes to continue for the next few weeks, as the Spanish crop is around three weeks late. The delay was caused by the extreme weather conditions that we saw over the summer, which led to late delivery of seeds and propagated plants to growers. This has particularly impacted vine, cherry vine, plum and beef tomatoes.

There are some specific issues with beef tomatoes, which take longer to grow. We are taking some final product from Holland and Belgium, but because of the weather conditions and stage in the season, these are smaller than normal, and we therefore have some size concessions in place to maximise availability.

## Avocados



Following the issues that we've seen over the past few weeks, including an early finish to the Peruvian harvest and delays in port loadings from South Africa, the market across Europe remains very short, particularly on small fruit.

However, the situation is improving and we expect it to return to normal later this week.

## Pears



As we previously highlighted, quality and shelf life of the Northern Hemisphere pears are currently challenging.

It is not currently a major issue, but we are maintaining a watching brief as it could be a potential problem when we move to stored product in January.

## Potatoes



There are still potatoes in the fields that have not been harvested due to the weather, with growers already having written off more than 10%. With the lowest closing stocks for many years, we are expecting the potato crop to be difficult this season with the potential for shortages later in the cycle.

## Baby leaves



There was a sudden cold snap in Italy, dropping by around 10 degrees and accompanied by some wet weather. This meant that there was a dramatic slowdown in the growth of baby leaves, which has seen growers harvesting far less product per metre than normal.

The weather is improving and we expect availability and quality to improve at the end of the week and into next.

## Figs



We are anticipating a couple of challenging weeks following the end of the Turkish season and a slight delay and low volumes from Brazil. We expect this to last around two weeks before supply returns to normal.

Unfortunately, the quality of product from Peru, which could have been used to cover, is not good enough, following the recent weather conditions in the region.

## Strawberries



There are severe market shortages with strawberries, with UK and Dutch glasshouse stock already running low due to low light levels and unseasonal weather in September.

We are still a couple of weeks away from the first Moroccan fruits arriving and, in the meantime, we are continuing to work with our growers to try to mitigate the shortages and identify additional supplies.

## Bananas and Pineapples



The recent storms that we have seen in the UK and further afield have impacted shipping and caused some delays in crops arriving, including bananas and pineapples. While we expect these delays to be short-term, we have put some concessions in place to aid availability.

## Red Chillies



We are seeing some improvement in the availability of red chillies from Spain, which will help supply recover from a challenging couple of months. We will transfer to more Moroccan product to complement Spanish over the next few weeks, which should return the market to normal.

## Celery



Celery has seen a positive improvement in the past week, following the wet weather that caused an abrupt end to the UK season. We expect that Spanish supply will continue to improve and availability will return to normal next week.

## Lemons



We have received our first deliveries of Spanish product this week. The quality is looking good at the moment, albeit there is some early season greening.

## Portabello mushrooms



We have seen some short-term issues with supply of Portabello mushrooms, which is due to issues with compost causing quality concerns.

We expect supply to return to normal by the end of this week.

## Raspberries



Storm Bernard has badly affected many growers in Morocco with some forecasts suggesting that market availability is down by around half. However, we have been able to maintain good availability so far and will continue to work with our suppliers to minimise any impact on customers.

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Working together to serve our customers amazing produce and products

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