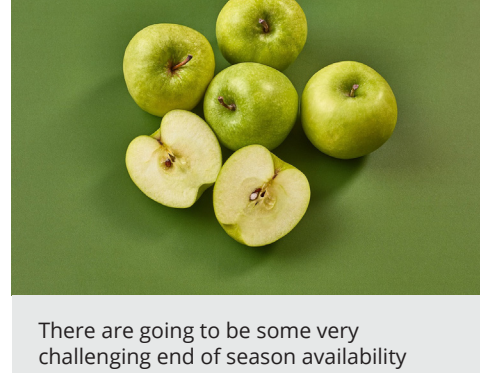


Crop Report

Wednesday 16th April to Wednesday 23rd April

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.

Apples



There are going to be some very challenging end of season availability problems with apples. The early season frosts have contributed to one of the worst harvests on record. Granny Smith's remains the most impacted, although we expect to see other varieties facing similar problems in the coming weeks.

We anticipate the switch to Southern Hemisphere red apples to begin in the next week or so, which will be followed by Granny Smith's and other green varieties a few weeks after that.

There is around a week's supply left on our seasonal British lines.

Brassica update

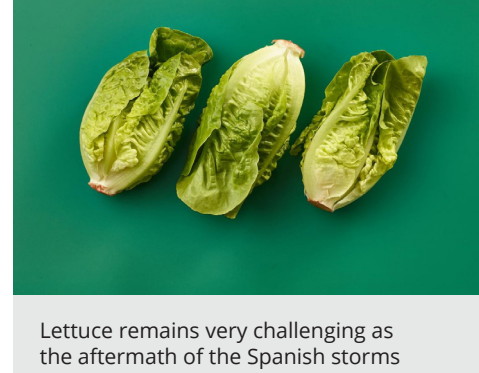


A concession remains in place for 5kg and individual savoy cabbage as sizes are smaller than we would like as a result of the low light levels earlier in the season, which has slowed the growth of the crop.

Spanish produce continues to be impacted by the aftereffects of the storms and flooding that we saw last month. Currently, we are watching cauliflower, broccoli and sweetheart cabbage very closely. However, working with our suppliers, we have been able to avoid any major availability issues so far.

Other brassicas including kale, spring greens, cabbage and UK cauliflower are all performing well, with good availability and quality.

Lettuce



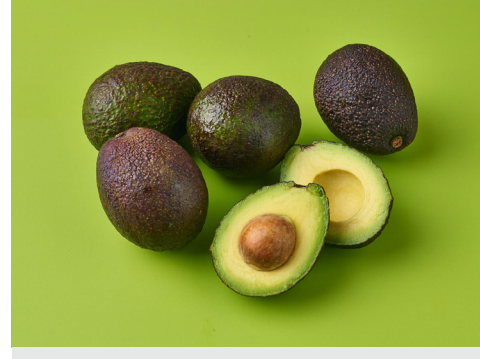
Lettuce remains very challenging as the aftermath of the Spanish storms continues to be felt. The main problem with the crop is the reduction in size as growers remove the outer leaves to minimise the mud contamination that was caused by the rain.

The greatest issues are being seen with little gem, which is in very short supply. There is some improvement on Cos, although it remains difficult, and iceberg has limited, but reasonable availability.

We are maintaining a number of concessions to try to maximise lettuce availability, but we expect the rest of April and the first 2 weeks of May to be difficult.

We hope to start receiving early British product at the end of April, although we do not expect the harvest to be begin in earnest until the middle of May.

Avocados



While we are not expecting shortages, market availability is currently restricted as we transition between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

We are working closely with our suppliers and managing limited stocks well. We do have a small concession in place for size, although we do not expect this to have a major impact on availability.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully over the coming weeks and provide updates as necessary. We expect better market availability by the end of the month.

Asparagus



We saw some particularly difficult challenges with Mexican asparagus as growers sent additional supplies to the US market ahead of the imposition of tariffs on imports.

This has had an impact on the end of season Mexican availability, which has now finished. We are expecting the first deliveries of Peruvian crops at the end of this week, but there may be some short-term availability issues until then.

We have a concession in place on stem size to help mitigate availability issues.

Easy Peelers



There have been some severe weather challenges that have impacted the Moroccan harvest and meant that growers have been unable to export any produce. Those problems have now eased, and farmers should start dispatching fruit from the end of the week. Once that product does arrive, there will be a concession in place to allow for a greener skin colour, which does not impact the eating quality, but is caused by the unseasonably cold temperatures.

While we await the stock from Morocco, our procurement team has sourced additional stocks from Spain to cover the gap in supply. However, due to inclement weather there, this fruit is smaller, and a concession is in place to maximise availability.

British Basil



We are expecting some market disruption on basil, with challenges to British supply in the short-term, due to the demise of a large vertical grower which has gone into administration.

While we have worked with our suppliers to source some additional supply from Kenya in the short-term, we do not expect British basil to be available until end-May, which is in line with the start of the traditional season.

British Chives



There are ongoing issues with vertically farmed chives, which will mean a lack of British-produced product for a short period until the end of May.

Kenyan produce, or a non-air freight product will be available until then.

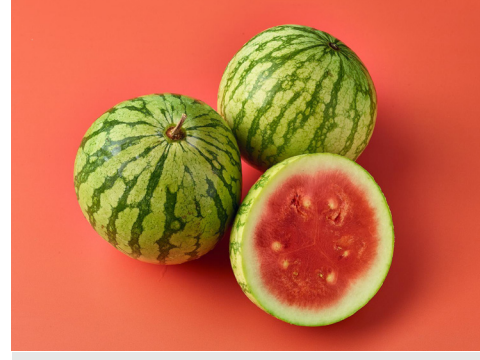
Lemons



We expect the core Primofiori variety to finish around a month earlier than would be expected in a normal season. This means that we will need to use more of the larger Verna variety to maintain availability at the end of the season. Due to heavy rainfall in Spain last month, these have grown even larger, and we therefore have size concessions in place to help manage supplies across the range.

Once we move to the Southern Hemisphere at the end of the month the concessions will be removed.

Melons



The poor weather earlier in the Central American season is having an impact on watermelon and honeydew melons, causing some availability issues. We have introduced concessions to support supply over the coming weeks.

There are some longer-term concerns on honeydew melons, which are likely to be a challenge as we get towards the end of the season in mid-May, with growers reporting a larger than expected level of outgrades.

Peppers



We continue to work very closely with suppliers to try to minimise the issues that are being seen with peppers. There are particular problems with yellow peppers, and we have a range of concessions in place to aid availability while we await the move to Holland in around two weeks' time.

Sweet Potato



We are expecting the poor American harvest, which is around 40% down on a standard year, to start impacting the market at the end of April/beginning of May.

In the meantime, we are working with suppliers to try to mitigate the issues, for example looking at increasing supply from other origins such as Portugal, but it is likely to be a very challenging period.

Mangetout



Both Egyptian and Kenyan crops have now recovered from high temperatures and hailstorms respectively, which caused some market-wide shortages last week.

We are not expecting any further issues and normal supply has been resumed.

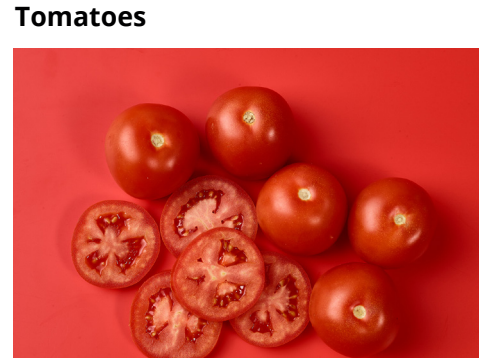
CauliShoots®



We are expecting the supply of CauliShoots® to finish at the end of this week, as weather conditions force a premature end to the Spanish season. The cause of the problem was initially excessive heat, followed by heavy rains earlier in the season.

We anticipate that the UK harvest will be ready in June.

Tomatoes



We are continuing to see improvement in the availability of tomatoes, albeit we have put a range of concessions in place to try to aid availability. We expect to move to Dutch supply in around two weeks' time.

Eggs



The Government's decision to extend the poultry Housing Order over additional areas of the country last week highlights the continuing risk of bird flu in the UK.

Where birds are not housed, our producers are working to enhanced biosecurity measures, such as no watering on the range, control of visitors and enhanced disinfection to minimise the risk to their birds.

We continue to work with our suppliers on contingency planning to mitigate any problems, should the need arise.