

Crop Report

Wednesday 8th October to Wednesday 15th 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.

Berries



As we enter the seasonal transition period, there are issues with the availability and quality of berries. It is often challenging at this time of year, with weather conditions proving difficult for growers.

Blueberries have already transitioned to Peru, and we are seeing a significant level of this early season product being graded out. However, we expect this to be relatively short-term, and anticipate an improvement as the season progresses and deliveries increase.

Blackberries are moving to UK glasshouse production, which is putting some strain on availability, although we expect this to improve over the coming week. Some growers are bringing in imports to supplement British production, although we hope to avoid that.

Raspberries are challenging, but stable. Again, growers are importing additional quantities, but we are hopeful that our supply will remain British next week.

Strawberries are also seeing some availability issues, and we have concessions in place to try to support supply, including for size, as well as non-standard packaging for imported product, which is being used to supplement British produce. If we do require this, it will only be in small amounts.

It is worth noting that glasshouse fruit is traditionally softer, due to the growing conditions and speed at which it grows.

Lettuce



We have seen some improvement in the level of pests affecting lettuce, which is the result of the change in the weather, combined with the actions that our growers have taken.

The proliferation of aphids followed the long, hot summer, but as it becomes cooler and wetter, the insects naturally disappear. Coupled with that, our growers have been stripping back lettuce heads to remove aphids, harvesting only heads without visible pest presence and skipping heavily infested fields entirely, which has led to a much lower presence.

Little Gem and Cos have seen significant improvement, although stripping back leaves on Cos means that a concession is in place to pack two heads instead of one where necessary. Iceberg continues to improve, but at a slower rate as it grows inward and is more difficult to clean

We are expecting further improvements in the coming weeks, before we transition to Spain, which should begin around 20 October for Iceberg, with Little Gem and Cos following the week after, all being well.

Mushrooms

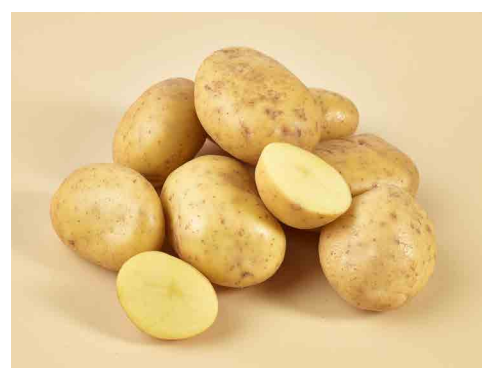


The situation with mushrooms remains very challenging, but is showing some signs of improvement, with minimal rejections over the past week.

However, catering mushrooms continue to be problematic, both in terms of quality and availability. We are continuing to work with our three suppliers of catering mushrooms to try to maximise availability.

Growers are attempting to recover from an earlier period of high temperatures across Poland and Ireland. As suppliers try to catch up, they are delaying picking for long as possible to meet orders. However, the delay means that temperatures are not getting low enough and mould is developing as a result, which has been causing rejections.

Potatoes



While overall availability is expected to improve this season, largely as a result of increased planting and lower demand over the hot summer, some quality challenges are emerging.

The hot, dry spring and summer has led to an increase in dry matter on potatoes, which is causing some internal bruising. We are also expecting some availability challenges for larger potatoes, especially the larger bakers, which could result in less produce later in the season, due to the poor growing conditions over the summer.

It is unlikely that we will know the final outcome until after the full harvest in October and November.

Broccoli



Market availability remains good, following the earlier weather-related challenges. The main challenges that remain are with pests, which continue to be found in significant quantities on farms. We are working closely with growers and undertaking additional steps to try to minimise the impact on customers.

We are currently planning to start the transition to Spain at the end of October or very early November.

Cabbage



Concessions remain in place to support availability of both red and white cabbage, which are suffering from reduced volumes, with the earlier lack of water and heat affecting the main growing period and leading to a reduction in yield.

There are also some continuing quality issues, caused by insect damage and edema which means that more leaves need to be cleared away to reach acceptable quality, reducing head weight and yields.

There are also concessions in place for savoy cabbage, to maintain availability following the difficult growing conditions.

Lemons



Over the past few weeks, we have been working with suppliers to try to minimise the impact of a poor quality Southern Hemisphere season. It was expected that it would be a very difficult transition to the Northern Hemisphere. However, we now expect to have a much smoother changeover than previously expected, as we have secured additional stocks.

It will still be difficult, but we anticipate that only a concession for size will be required, with a slightly smaller lemon replacing the large varieties.

However, while this is good news, we are still expecting a poor Spanish harvest, with significantly reduced yields, which is likely to lead to season-long problems.

Leafy clementines



There's not long to wait for the first deliveries of our new season Spanish Leafy Clementines, which is around a fortnight away. Once they arrive around 20 October, we expect this popular seasonal favourite to remain in stock until around March 2026, depending on the quality of the harvest.

Salad Cress



Unfortunately, there have been some issues with salad cress, caused by the seed not being strong enough to maintain yields. This is likely to impact harvests over the next couple of weeks, but is expected to return to normal after that.

Nectarines and Peaches



Our seasonal nectarines and peaches have now finished for this year. We look forward to bringing you these popular fruits again next summer.