

Crop Report

Wednesday 5th August to Wednesday 12th August

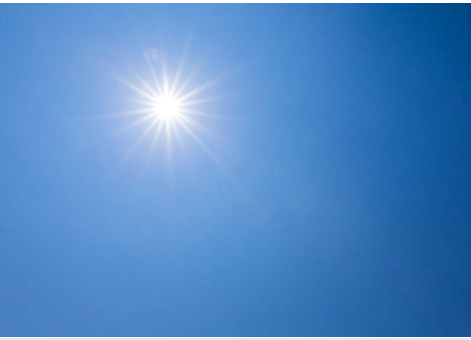
Get the insight you need to plan more effectively and manage your menus with our latest report from the field, brought to you by our expert produce team.

Seasonal Spotlight... Sweetcorn Ribs



Our expert growers ensure that every cob develops the juicy snap and rich, buttery corn character that chefs love. The result is sweetcorn that cooks beautifully, eats brilliantly and delivers consistent quality all season long. Our expert partners, Barfoots, use the innovative Freshlock® system, which gently pasteurises the corn to lock in its natural goodness and just-picked freshness, so it reaches customers in perfect condition. Look out for our tasty cobettes, also available using the Freshlock® system.

Weather update



The weather continues to create challenges for growers, with the issues being widely reported across the mainstream media. This is causing concern not only in the UK, but also across Europe, where many areas remain in the midst of heatwave conditions. The BBC reported that July 2026 was the driest July on record for England and Wales since records began 190 years ago, with England recording only 6.5mm of rainfall, and Wales 9.3mm. Both of these are around 10% of the average expected rainfall.

With temperatures expected to remain high and rainfall still limited, there is a continuing risk of plants experiencing heat stress.

As we enter August, additional restrictions on pest controls are now in place. There are concerns that existing pest issues could worsen without rainfall to help reduce their presence.

Asparagus



El Niño is expected to become more of an issue during August, as conditions in Peru continue to unsettle the growing environment.

This is leading to quality concerns on longer sea-freighted arrivals, where extended transit times increase the risk of condition issues. To help protect product quality and support continuity of supply, air freight is being used where necessary to shorten journeys and reduce stress on the crop.

Despite this additional support, the wider market is expected to remain tight and challenging for the foreseeable future, with ongoing climatic instability continuing to influence both quality and availability.

Brassicas



The continued hot weather is placing sustained pressure on brassica crops, with growth slowing noticeably across several lines. The coming weeks will be challenging for brassica crops, and media reports suggest that some growers may struggle to reach the end of the season.

Pest pressure has also increased, and suppliers are working hard to manage this despite the added challenges of limited rainfall and tighter restrictions on pesticide use.

A concession has been introduced for cauliflower, as head weights remain below normal levels. Product continues to meet size specifications, although heads may be smaller than customers are used to.

Sweetheart cabbage is also facing challenges, with the weather causing market-wide shortages.

Red and white cabbage availability remains heavily constrained as the stored-crop season comes to an end. Current concessions are helping to ease some pressure, but supply is expected to remain challenging over the coming weeks.

Tomatoes



We expect availability of core tomato lines to be restricted over the next couple of weeks, as the impact of the heatwaves continues to affect the crop. Fruit is colouring very quickly, which is reducing shelf life. We are working with suppliers to pick crops at the greener end of the specification to help address this issue, but we are likely to see some quality challenges over the coming weeks.

Once the immediate difficult period has passed, availability and quality should improve.

Isle of Wight tomatoes also remain affected by the weather across all major varieties, including yellow cherry and heirloom tomatoes. Volumes continue to improve, but we expect it to take another week or two for the situation to fully recover.

Lettuce



Growing conditions remain challenging across many parts of the country, with many lettuce growers facing a difficult period as prolonged hot weather slows growth and places crops under stress. Our growers near Preston have benefited from recent rainfall and cooler conditions, allowing them to maintain consistent supply despite wider market challenges.

The market remains volatile, but we will continue to work closely with growers to minimise the impact on customers.

Cucumbers



While we have seen the expected improvement in produce from the Netherlands, Spanish production has been slower to recover with the high temperatures causing reduced yields and some crop losses. We expect around a two-week hiatus while Spain recovers, and it could be a challenging until the end of August.

Quality is also giving cause for concern, particularly on class 2, affecting shelf life and increasing the risk of defects.

Peppers



Availability is currently satisfactory, but we expect some challenges in the coming weeks as the harvest in the Netherlands has peaked, and volumes are beginning to decline. This is being exacerbated by poor yields in Spain, caused by hot weather that is placing significant stress on plants and creating uncertainty around future harvests. High temperatures are disrupting growth patterns, reducing fruit set, and making it difficult for growers to predict how volumes will develop. Quality is also being affected by the heat.

We expect the next three weeks to be difficult.

Berries



While we are not expecting any immediate availability issues, the hot weather is placing additional stress on the plants. We will maintain a watching brief and hope that more conducive weather will return the crop to normal conditions.