

Crop Report

Wednesday 16th September to Wednesday 23rd September

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.

Tomatoes



Tomato availability continues to improve slowly as growing conditions improve. It is however, taking some time for the market to return to normal. Some lines are more challenging than others, for example, larger G tomatoes are in very short supply and both plum and cherry remain tight.

We do expect a steady and continuing improvement, albeit widespread challenges remain.

The seasonal Isle of Wight Coeur De Boeuf will be coming to a finish shortly as end of season quality challenges are now becoming more evident. We expect this to conclude next week.

Brassicas



Growing conditions have improved over the past couple of weeks, but the category is still facing several challenges.

Broccoli remains the most affected line. Although availability is satisfactory, quality issues are significant. Over maturity on smaller heads, irregular shapes and a higher likelihood of rot are still common, particularly where rainfall has affected heads with weaker dome structure. Pest pressure is also increasing, with caterpillars becoming more prevalent and often hidden during harvesting. We are approaching the transition to Spanish supply (end October) and monitoring it closely, as there are concerns the seasons may not align cleanly. Work with suppliers continues to ensure the transfer is as smooth as possible.

Cabbage, especially red cabbage, remains difficult. Concessions are in place to support availability, and seasonal cabbage lines continue to experience intermittent pressure.

Pest challenges are evident across the wider category, and we are working closely with suppliers to mitigate the impact on customers as conditions evolve.

Peppers



Dutch supply remains under pressure, with crops still recovering from recent poor growing conditions. Red and green peppers are holding relatively steady, but yellow remains the most constrained line, with growers struggling to lift volumes. Fruit continues to present at the smaller end of specification, and producers are still relying on earlier stage colour picks to maintain shelf life and keep product moving.

Quality challenges persist across the category, though Class 2 fruit continues to show greater resilience. This is helping to support overall availability at a time when Class 1 remains tight.

Looking ahead, the market is expected to stay under strain for the remainder of the season. Sizing is likely to remain pressured as crops continue to struggle, and both quality and availability are set to stay fragile.

Focus on....Blackberries



Grown in Britain and carefully hand picked at peak ripeness, our blackberries are selected for one purpose above all else, exceptional flavour. Working with Driscoll's, the world's leading berry company, we use naturally bred varieties chosen for outstanding sweetness, texture and aroma. The result is fruit with remarkable eating quality and a depth of flavour that reflects the very best of the British season.

Cucumber



The market remains challenging and we're not yet through the worst of the availability issues, but conditions are steadily improving. Dutch volumes are recovering, and Spanish growers are now moving into their autumn cycles, which will support supply over the coming weeks.

We expect some volatility as the season settles, with peaks and troughs likely until November. Within this, our programmes remain on target and we're managing well in a constrained market.

Courgettes



The UK season has now finished, and we are transitioning back to Spanish supply. Availability from Spain is currently low, which means the early part of the transition is likely to bring some market wide challenges.

This pressure is being driven by the impact of summer heat on yields, and conditions are expected to remain difficult until the end of the month. We are working closely with suppliers to support continuity and minimise any impact on customers as the new season settles.

Asparagus



Growing conditions in Peru remain unsettled, with the effects of El Niño continuing to influence supply. The pressure is most visible on longer sea freighted arrivals, where extended transit times are still increasing the likelihood of condition issues.

To protect quality and keep programmes moving, air freight is being used where needed to shorten journeys and reduce crop stress. Even with this support, the market remains tight, and meaningful improvement is unlikely until growing conditions stabilise and sea freight performance becomes more reliable.

Melons



The transition from the Spanish season into Brazilian supply remains challenging. As Brazilian volumes build, fruit is running slightly smaller than usual, though still within specification. This may mean a higher melon count in weight based boxes.

We're continuing to work closely with suppliers to minimise any impact on customers, including sourcing additional fruit from alternative origins to support continuity of supply.

Padron Peppers



Market wide availability remains tight as the crop moves between the summer and winter cycles. The summer season ended unusually quickly, creating a short gap before winter volumes are fully established, and this is driving the current pressure on supply.

While we are not expecting availability issues this week, it remains a fast moving situation in a very tight market. Conditions are expected to stay challenging for around two weeks as the winter crop builds. We continue to work closely with suppliers to manage continuity and minimise any impact on customers during this transition.

Aubergines



Availability and quality are becoming increasingly difficult as we move towards the end of the season. The next few weeks are expected to be particularly challenging, with shorter shelf life and quality issues becoming more apparent as crops lose strength.

We are working closely with suppliers to minimise the impact and manage continuity as the season winds down.

Berries



Colder evenings are beginning to slow raspberry growth, a sign that the UK season is nearing its close. We're not expecting any major issues as a result, but it does mark the start of the seasonal wind down.

Blueberries will be the first berry to transition away from UK supply at the end of the month, with the rest of the berry categories following shortly after.

Lettuce



There has been a significant increase in aphid pressure in some parts of the country, which is impacting supply of lettuce. However, our lettuce is grown in the north west of the country, which is not currently experiencing the level of contamination seen elsewhere and our growers are currently managing the situation. The grower has also been taking proactive steps to manage the situation. We are monitoring this closely and will provide updates should the situation change.

The exception is Red Gem, where availability has been significantly reduced, but other lettuce lines, including standard Gem, remain more stable and available.

British apples



British apples are now back in stock for the new season. Despite the difficult growing conditions over the summer, the crop is shaping up well. According to British Apples & Pears, growers are expecting strong quality and flavour this year, with orchards delivering fruit that reflects the best of the new season.

Parsnip and carrots



The extreme summer heat not only affected established crops, but also disrupted drilling of new seed. This is now feeding through into early crop performance, and we expect volatility in both quality and availability as a result. The impact will be most visible through October and November, when the drilling challenges become fully apparent, but signs of pressure are likely to continue throughout the season.

Potatoes



Water shortages during key growing periods are now feeding through more clearly into this season's crop, with baker grades carrying the greatest pressure. Sizing challenges are expected to persist throughout the season, particularly across baker 40s and 50s, where availability is likely to remain under sustained strain.

Although the crop is not yet fully harvested, early indications point to a season long issue, with limited scope for improvement as lifting continues.