

# Crop Report

Wednesday 3rd December to Wednesday 10th December

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.

## Shipping



While there are no immediate concerns, shipping delays are increasing as we approach the busy Christmas period. Congestion at ports is already causing some disruption, and this may worsen closer to the holidays.

In some cases, vessels may skip UK ports to maintain schedules in Europe, meaning produce would need to be transported back to the UK by road or vessel.

We are maintaining a watching brief and will work with suppliers should the need arise.

## Tomatoes



The market is experiencing some challenges with the availability of large G as well as GG-size beef tomatoes due to late planting in Spain and Morocco.

To maintain supply, we're working closely with our suppliers and sourcing from additional origins to reduce reliance on traditional growing regions. As a contingency, we've introduced size concessions for slightly smaller tomatoes if needed.

We expect availability to stabilise within the next couple of weeks and should continue for the remainder of the season.

## Berries



We are at the very end of the Dutch strawberry season, which is limiting supply. We are using Egyptian and Moroccan produce to ensure that we maintain availability over this tricky period.

As a result of the measures we have put in place with our suppliers, we have managed a difficult November well with minimal impact on customers, despite the market-wide shortages.

Raspberries are continuing the transition between regions in Morocco, which is causing some market-wide availability challenges. While the market is very short of produce, we have worked with our suppliers and maintained good levels of supply.

## Easy Peelers



The South African season has now finished, and Spanish fruit—typically used to bridge the gap—has been of lower quality this year.

We're starting to receive early Moroccan Easy Peelers, though sizes are still small. To keep fruit available, we've introduced a size concession.

By the end of the month, we will be fully into the Moroccan season.

## Cucumbers



Warm weather in October has brought forward the crop, creating a small gap in market availability, while we wait for the next set of cucumber crops.

While we are not expecting shortages, availability will be challenging. However, as cucumbers are a fast-growing crop, we do not anticipate any long-term challenges, and we expect some improvement by mid-December.

## Peppers



The market is currently facing challenges with the thrips pest, primarily affecting the Almería region of Spain—the main winter pepper-growing area.

This is unusual for this early stage of the season, but we've spent the past two years building a strong geographical spread of suppliers across other regions in Spain and additional countries to reduce risk.

While thrips can affect appearance, it does not impact the eating quality of the peppers.

## Figs



Availability is beginning to recover as we move from the Northern Hemisphere to Southern Hemisphere crops. The first Brazilian figs have started to arrive, helping to ease the recent shortages.

Supply remains limited, but we expect a steady improvement as the Brazilian season gets fully underway.

## Grapes



We're currently moving from Northern Hemisphere to Southern Hemisphere grapes, which has caused availability to become a little tighter than usual.

To maintain availability, we have a concession on red grapes as the new season brings natural variation in size.

## Cabbage



Cabbage will remain challenging this season as maintaining weight continues to be difficult. To keep supply consistent, size concessions will stay in place for both red and white cabbage.

There are some ongoing quality challenges to cabbage crops caused by oedema, which is a build-up of water in leaf tissue. We are working closely with growers to ensure our customers receive the best product available.

## Eggs



Avian Influenza (AI) outbreaks continue to be reported across the UK. To help protect commercial poultry, the Government has introduced mandatory Housing Orders in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, alongside an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) requiring enhanced biosecurity measures.

We source eggs from multiple regions to reduce the risk of localised disruption and are working closely with suppliers to minimise any impact on availability.

Under UK legislation, when hens are temporarily housed indoors due to a Government order, eggs can still be marketed as free range until the Chief Veterinary Officer confirms it is safe for birds to return outdoors.