

Crop Report

Wednesday 9th September to Wednesday 16th 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



Trade media reports continue to highlight the ongoing challenges in the tomato market. Conditions have improved slightly thanks to milder temperatures, but lower light levels are slowing the recovery, with fruit taking longer to colour.

A full recovery will take time, and pressure will remain on specific lines. Larger tomatoes are expected to become increasingly difficult as we move towards the end of the season. Cherry tomatoes are also set to be tight, driven by poor Moroccan yields and limited Dutch supply.

Growers continue to pick more backward colour fruit to meet demand, though this remains within specification.

Brassicas



Growing conditions have improved over the past couple of weeks, but lower light levels are slowing the recovery and continue to add pressure across the category.

Broccoli supply is improving, though quality challenges persist. Over maturity on smaller heads, irregular shapes and a higher likelihood of rot remain common, particularly where rainfall has affected heads lacking the typical dome structure. We are approaching the transition to Spanish supply, which we are monitoring closely. There are concerns that the seasons may not align cleanly, and we are working with suppliers to make the transfer as smooth as possible.

Weight concessions remain in place for red and white cabbage to support availability. Cauliflower also continues under concessions for both weight and size.

Some availability challenges for seasonal cabbage persist, and we are working closely with suppliers to mitigate the impact on customers as conditions stabilise.

Peppers



Availability from the Netherlands remains low. Green and red peppers are showing early signs of improvement, but yellow continues to be the most challenging line. Sizes are still trending towards the lower end of specification due to ongoing growing condition pressures, and producers are increasingly picking more backward colour fruit to support shelf life and maintain continuity.

Defects continue to rise across the category, though this has helped availability of Class 2 peppers, which are not being impacted to the same extent.

Overall, the market is expected to stay under pressure for the remainder of the season. Further impact on sizing is likely as crops continue to struggle, and both quality and availability are set to remain fragile.

Focus on....British apples



British apples are back! The heatwaves over the summer may have caused havoc for many farmers, but according to the trade body British Apples & Pears apple, orchards across the nation will be celebrating the best top fruit quality and flavour in years. It's likely to be an excellent crop - sweet, juicy and bursting with flavour, so order yours now.

Cucumber



While the wider market continues to be challenging, we are seeing better conditions as Dutch volumes are improving, while Spanish growers are starting their autumn crops.

We expect some volatility in the upcoming weeks, with peaks and troughs in availability likely until November. Within this, our programmes remain on target, and we are managing well in a constrained market.

Courgettes



The UK season will finish in the next week or so before we transition back to Spanish supply. Availability from Spain is expected to be low until the end of the month due to the impact of the summer heat on yields, and the market is likely to remain challenging throughout this period.

We are working closely with suppliers to support continuity as the transition takes place.

Asparagus



Peru's growing environment remains unsettled, and El Niño disruption is now feeding through more noticeably into supply. The impact is most evident on longer sea freighted arrivals, where extended transit times continue to increase the risk of condition issues.

Air freight is still being used selectively to protect quality and keep programmes moving by shortening journeys and reducing crop stress. Even with this support, the market remains tight, and meaningful improvement is unlikely until growing conditions stabilise.

Melons



The Spanish season is coming to its conclusion, which means that quality and availability are stretched.

It should be a relatively short period of uncertainty, as the Brazilian season has already begun, although it still early and will take some time to build to full strength.

In the meantime, we are working closely with suppliers to minimise any impact on customers, including sourcing additional fruit from alternative origins to support continuity of supply.

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 issues are expected to persist throughout the season, particularly across baker 40s and 50s, where availability is likely to remain under sustained strain.

Aubergines



We are expecting a challenging period for aubergines, as availability has tightened sharply as a result of the summer heatwaves. While we are currently managing supply well, we expect the end of the season to be particularly difficult, as Spanish plantings were delayed due to the heatwave.

Fine Beans



While the sun had a negative impact on most categories, beans thrive in the sunny weather. However, the heavy rainfall that followed the sunshine has impacted the quality of the crop, which means that we need to move supply into Dutch to preserve quality while we wait for the Moroccan season to start.

Peaches and Nectarines



We expect the seasonal peach and nectarine lines to finish in mid-September.

Padron Peppers



Market wide availability has tightened as the crop transitions between the summer and winter cycles. The summer season finished unusually quickly, creating a gap before the winter crop is fully online, and this is driving the current reduction in supply.

The market is expected to remain challenging for around two weeks. We are working closely with suppliers to manage continuity and minimise the impact on customers during this transition period.