

Crop Report

Wednesday 2nd September to Wednesday 9th 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



Tomatoes are expected to remain very difficult for the next week or so. The anticipated improvement has been slower than hoped, but cooler temperatures should support crop recovery as we move further into September.

Larger tomatoes remain the most affected, with sizing continuing to face challenges. This is also impacting round tomatoes, while beef and plum varieties continue to face sustained pressure. Cherry tomatoes are experiencing additional disruption, with some delays out of Morocco adding to overall tightness.

Quality remains challenging. Shelf life is still reduced following the recent hot weather, and growers are picking more backward colour fruit to maximise durability and maintain continuity.

We continue to work closely with suppliers to minimise the impact on customers, securing additional volumes where possible and managing programmes carefully in a very constrained market.

Brassicas



The summer heatwaves continue to affect British brassicas, leaving the market extremely short. Although recent rainfall has offered some support, overall conditions remain very difficult and availability is still constrained.

Cauliflower is showing early signs of improvement, helped by better weather and additional imported volumes. Quality concerns do remain, and short-term issues are still possible. The crop is also prone to rapid maturity, which increases the risk of cracking, sprouting and bruising on heads that are already more yellow than usual. Broccoli is facing similar pressure, with over maturity on smaller heads, irregular shapes and a higher likelihood of rot where rainfall has affected heads that lack the typical dome structure, and it remains very challenging.

Concessions are in place across cauliflower and red and white cabbage to support availability.

There are some concerns around the sprout harvest, with lower volumes expected in the run up to Christmas. At this stage we do not anticipate any issues with our programmes.

Pest pressure also remains high. Caterpillars and whitefly are prevalent, particularly in Lincolnshire, partly due to the grain harvest which has displaced pests onto brassica fields. Recent rain has helped to reduce some of the issue, but in line with standard practice, produce should be thoroughly washed before use.

Peppers



Pepper availability from the Netherlands remains low. While there has been some improvement in red peppers, yellow has deteriorated further, and green remains relatively stable. Sizes continue to trend towards the lower end of specification due to ongoing growing condition challenges, and growers are increasingly picking more backward colour fruit to support shelf life and maintain continuity.

Defects are rising across the category, though Class 2 peppers are proving more resilient and are not being affected to the same extent.

Spain is delivering steadier yields, although volumes are naturally lighter at this point in the season.

Overall, the market is expected to remain 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....Figs



September offers a short, but exceptional window for European figs, avoiding the need for airfreight and delivering standout flavour from one of the world's oldest cultivated fruits.

Warm figs gently before serving, a brief roast or grill intensifies their honeyed sweetness and enhances their velvety texture. Pair with acidity or salt (balsamic, citrus, prosciutto or fresh cheese) to balance their natural richness.

Cucumber



While conditions continue to improve, the category remains under significant pressure. Dutch yields are holding steady, and Spanish production is beginning to lift as we move into September, bringing signs of recovery.

Even with these improvements, the market remains tight. We expect volatility to persist throughout the season, 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.

Parsnips



The lack of water during key growing periods is having a direct impact on parsnip quality, with smaller roots and reduced yields becoming more evident across the crop. This pressure is expected to continue into the year ahead, with lower volumes, more variable quality and a higher proportion of Class 2 produce likely as crops struggle to size under prolonged dry conditions.

Further challenges may emerge as we move into autumn due to the difficulties experienced during planting. We are working closely with suppliers to manage this risk and maintain continuity wherever possible.

Asparagus



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

To protect quality and keep programmes moving, air freight is still being used selectively to shorten journeys and reduce crop stress. Despite these interventions, the market remains tight, and meaningful improvement is unlikely until growing conditions stabilise.

Melons



As the Spanish season winds down, quality and availability are beginning to come under pressure. The most acute challenges are in watermelons and cantaloupe, where supply has tightened noticeably.

The Brazilian season has now begun, but volumes are still at an early stage and will take 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 will persist throughout the season, particularly across baker 40s and 50s, where yields are likely to stay under sustained strain as crops continue to struggle.

Aubergines



Availability has tightened sharply as crops feel the full impact of the recent heat. Growing conditions remain challenging, and growers expect the situation to stay difficult for the remainder of the season, with both quality and volumes continuing to fluctuate as crops struggle.

Pumpkins



Pumpkins will be materially smaller this year due to the poor growing conditions. Smalls will be plentiful, and mediums will be limited in volume, but large pumpkins are not expected to be available at all this season as crops continue to struggle.

Peaches and Nectarines



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