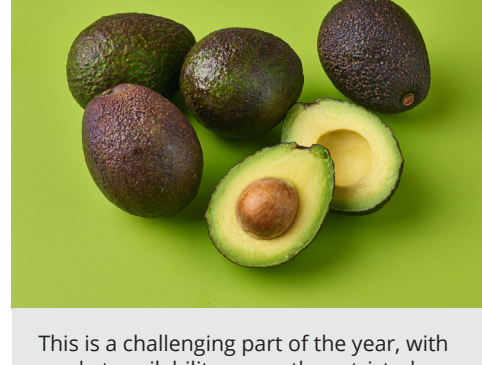


Crop Report

Wednesday 23rd April to Wednesday 30th April

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.

Avocados



This is a challenging part of the year, with market availability currently restricted as we transition between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. We are starting to use more Southern Hemisphere fruit as we are beginning to see some end of season quality issues.

While we are not expecting shortages, we are working closely with our suppliers and managing limited stocks well. We do have a small concession in place for size, although we do not expect this to have a major impact on availability.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully over the coming weeks and provide updates as necessary. We expect better market availability by the end of the month.

Brassica update



A concession remains in place for 5kg and individual savoy cabbage as sizes are smaller, something which we expect at this time of year, particularly as we move into stored crop, which will start from next week.

We have seen some ad hoc quality issues with Spanish broccoli but have been working with suppliers and have managed to minimise the impact on customers. We expect the transition to the UK to begin at the end of May to mid-June, weather dependent. This is currently looking positive, although it is still some way away.

We have started to receive cauliflower from Spain again, following the storms from a few weeks ago.

Other brassicas including kale, spring greens, cabbage and British cauliflower are all performing well, with good availability and quality.

Melons



We are continuing to work with suppliers to manage supply of watermelon and honeydew melons, which have been affected by poor weather conditions at the start of the Central American season. Concessions are in place until the end of the month to support availability.

We expect large honeydew melons to be the biggest challenge for the next couple of weeks. However, this should be alleviated by good growing conditions in Almeria, which means that we can move there earlier than anticipated at the beginning of May. Other melons are likely to transition as normal in the middle of May.

While good news in the short-term, the Almeria early season flush may lead to problems later in the season, as crops may not last and the move between Almeria and Murcia is traditionally one of the most challenging parts of the year.

Berries



While there are no availability issues, there have been some heat-related quality issues with berries. Our suppliers have introduced additional checks and procedures throughout the chain, which should mitigate the majority of problems.

Asparagus



St. George's Day marks the traditional start of the British asparagus season and initial availability of British crop is good. British asparagus will be available for the next couple of months.

Peppers



We expect to move to majority Dutch supply next week, which should alleviate many of the quality and availability problems that we've seen in recent weeks.

British Basil



There has been market disruption on British basil, due to the demise of a large vertical grower which has gone into administration. The traditional British season begins around the middle of May.

In the meantime, we have sourced some additional supply from Kenya. We are working on identifying a non-airfreighted option in the longer term.

British Chives



There are ongoing issues with vertically farmed chives, which will mean a lack of British-produced product for a short period until the end of May, when the traditional season begins.

Kenyan produce, or a non-air freight product will be available until then.

Lemons



It has been a challenging end to the season for Spanish producers, but this will be the last week that we will need to use that origin before switching to the Southern Hemisphere.

A concession on size will remain in place until we get into the Southern Hemisphere season, as we are currently having to use the larger Verna variety to maintain availability at the end of the season.

Apples



We are expecting the first Brazilian red apples next week, which should help address some of the challenging end of season availability that we've seen. This was caused by early season frosts.

We expect the end-of-season transition for green apples to take place in mid-May, which should bring an end to the recent availability problems.

Seasonal British lines will finish this week.

Lettuce



The lettuce market remains very difficult. However, we will be transitioning to the UK over the next three weeks.

Due to the challenges with Spanish Little Gem, we have already started to use some British supply, with our first deliveries arriving this week. This will increase as availability of the homegrown crop improves and will shortly be followed by other varieties.

By mid-May, all whole-head lettuce will be British, which should fully resolve the recent issues.

Sweet Potato



We are expecting the poor American harvest, which is around 40% down on a standard year, to start impacting the market at the end of April/beginning of May. This will lead to a difficult period in the market, lasting potentially until August.

In the meantime, we are working with suppliers to try to mitigate the issues, for example looking at increasing supply from other origins such as Portugal.

Carrots



We are approaching the end of the British carrot season and, while availability remains plentiful, there are some quality issues.

We are advising customers to keep carrots stored at as low a temperature as possible, which will help to maintain shelf-life.

CauliShoots®



We have now received the final delivery of CauliShoots®, which has brought the Spanish season to a premature close.

We continue to investigate options, but do not expect any major resolution until the UK harvest in June. We will confirm the date as soon as we are able.

Parsnips



We are approaching the end of the British parsnip season. We will transition to Spain in mid-May, and the seasons are currently lining up well.

We are however, maintaining a close watch on the Spanish crop, as there may be some problems caused by the heavy rains during the growing period.

Easy Peelers



We are expecting the first deliveries from Morocco this week, as the heat-related weather challenges that we have seen recently start to recede. There will be a concession in place for greening colour when they arrive. This impacts the skin of the fruit and does not affect eating quality.

Spanish fruit continues to be used alongside Moroccan to minimise any availability gaps. This fruit is smaller, and a concession is in place to maximise availability.

Eggs

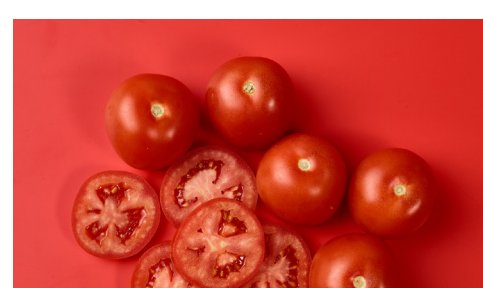


Avian Influenza continues to be a threat to producers across the country. There are Housing Orders across several regions of the country, although we have seen fewer cases in the past week.

Our producers are working to enhanced biosecurity measures, such as no watering on the range, control of visitors and enhanced disinfection to minimise the risk to their birds.

Retail egg sales are traditionally at their highest during the first quarter of the year, before reducing after Easter as the weather becomes warmer.

Tomatoes



There are some ongoing quality issues with Spanish tomatoes as we approach the end of the season. As a result, we are working with our suppliers to move forward the transition to the Dutch crop and expect to start that next week.