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Crop Report

Wednesday 11th November to Wednesday 18th November

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.

Blueberries



Adverse weather conditions continue to disrupt shipments from South America, resulting in delays to several imported produce lines. Blueberries remain one of the most heavily impacted categories, with market-wide shortages driven by multiple vessel delays and extended transit times.

We had anticipated the arrival of several shipments within the coming days; however, fog has affected port operations this week, creating further disruption and the potential for additional delays. While some volumes are continuing to arrive, including limited quantities of air-freighted fruit, availability is expected to remain constrained until delayed vessels are able to dock, and product enters the supply chain.

Current expectations are that fresh arrivals will begin to reach the market early next week, which should help to ease some of the immediate pressure on supply. Until then, continued challenges with availability and intermittent shortages across the blueberry market are expected.

We are working closely with our supply partners to secure additional volumes wherever possible and minimise disruption, but short-term constraints are likely to remain until vessel schedules return to normal and supply begins to recover.

Brassicas



The transition to Spanish brassica production has now been completed for both broccoli and sweetheart cabbage. We are also supplementing British cauliflower with Spanish-grown product, helping to maintain continuity of supply and quality as we move further into the winter season.

Across the remaining UK brassica crops, whitefly pressure continues to present significant challenges. Kale and cavolo nero are the most affected lines, resulting in some short-term availability constraints and increased quality management protocols.

Customers are advised to continue following the existing guidance and wash all brassica products thoroughly before use. While every effort is made to minimise the impact through crop monitoring and selection, the ongoing presence of whitefly remains a seasonal challenge within UK-grown crops.

Peppers



We are receiving early season Spanish peppers. Supply is expected to improve steadily as production volumes increase over the coming weeks, while availability of Class II peppers remains good.

Looking ahead, we anticipate some quality challenges during the season, particularly relating to thrips pressure in certain growing areas. While thrips does not affect the safety, flavour or eating quality of the product, it can result in lower yields, minor cosmetic skin marking and superficial surface defects.

We continue to work closely with our growers to manage these challenges and maintain the highest possible standards of quality and availability throughout the season. In addition, we are supplementing supply with product from Morocco, where thrips pressure currently appears to be less significant. We will continue to monitor crop conditions closely and maintain a watching brief as the season develops.

Tomatoes



While the tomato category remains challenging, it is improving as we transition fully into our winter programme. Quality, sizing and overall availability are all strengthening as volumes increase from Morocco, mainland Spain and the Canary Islands.

However, the season remains in its early stages, and prolonged heatwaves experienced across Spain during the growing cycle have delayed crop development and reduced yields. As a result, market volumes remain below expected levels, limiting the quantity of product currently available for harvest. While these challenges are affecting the wider tomato category, the greatest pressure continues to be seen in beef tomatoes and plum tomatoes.

Supply and crop performance are expected to improve from the end of the week as additional, more mature, volumes come on stream and harvesting gathers momentum across key growing regions.

We continue to work closely with our growers and supply partners to maximise availability, manage seasonal transitions effectively and minimise disruption to customers. While the market remains somewhat constrained, the overall outlook is positive, with availability, quality and consistency expected to improve steadily as the winter season progresses.

Mushrooms



The mushroom market is experiencing some short-term challenges due to the performance of new season straw, which has been affected by the exceptionally dry conditions experienced over the summer.

These conditions have impacted straw quality and, in turn, compost performance, leading to reduced growing efficiency and lower yields in some crops. As a result, availability pressures are being seen across parts of the wider market.

Despite these challenges, we do not anticipate any significant supply issues. Our multi-supplier sourcing strategy continues to provide strong resilience, and we are working closely with growers to manage volumes, maintain continuity of supply and minimise disruption for customers.

Strawberries



Strawberry availability remains extremely tight as the UK season comes to an end earlier than anticipated following a challenging growing period. At the same time, Dutch production, which is typically limited at this stage of the season, has declined sooner than expected, further reducing overall market supply.

Moroccan production is expected to become fully established within the next two to three weeks, although some limited early-season volumes may become available before then. In the meantime, alternative origins are being explored, including Egypt, where supply is anticipated to increase over the coming weeks.

As a result, the market is expected to face a particularly challenging transition period, with widespread shortages likely until Moroccan volumes increase and supply levels begin to stabilise.

We continue to work closely with our growers and supply partners to secure additional volumes where possible to try to minimise disruption. For example, we have sourced additional fruit from the United States to help support continuity of supply. However, quality challenges remain across some origins, with recent adverse growing conditions affecting soft fruit quality and shelf life.

Given the extent of the current supply constraints across multiple growing regions, intermittent shortages and reduced availability are expected in the short term before conditions improve as Moroccan production reaches full volume.

Spotlight on... Rainbow Chantenay Carrots



A colourful take on their more famous cousin, Rainbow Chantenay Carrots are a great addition to the plate, bringing some colour to autumnal dishes. They bring colour, sweetness and a touch of heritage to the plate. Grown on specialist British farms, their small, conical shape gives a tender bite and a concentrated flavour, making them a favourite for chefs who want visual impact without compromising on taste.

News in Brief:



Asparagus remains under pressure, with El Niño disrupting development, and ad hoc air freight is being used to protect quality, but overall availability will stay tight until field conditions stabilise.

Lime availability is improving following the arrival of delayed vessels from Brazil. However, export volumes remain below typical seasonal levels, keeping overall market supply relatively tight. Our expanded sourcing strategy is helping to provide greater resilience, with additional origins supporting supply and reducing the risk of disruption as availability continues to recover.

Melon supply is expected to return to standard-sized fruit following a period where larger sizes were more prevalent due to favourable growing conditions. This marks a return to normal seasonal specifications and sizing profiles. There are some concerns around logistics and transportation, due to vessel delays, but we are currently expecting this to remain stable.

Red and white cabbage will continue to face market-wide availability challenges until the new season, due largely to the reduction in the number of growers. We are working with suppliers to maximise availability.

Fine beans are impacted by extreme temperatures in Morocco which have increased spider mite pressure, resulting in leaf damage and weaker plants. This has impacted both yields and overall quality, with supply expected to remain constrained over the coming weeks. We are taking measures to try to minimise the impact on customers.

Potatoes - this year's potato crop is one of the most challenging in recent years, with difficult summer growing conditions and limited water availability reducing yields across much of the UK. Availability is expected to become increasingly tight after Christmas, particularly for larger baking potatoes, while smaller grades remain more widely available and are expected to offer the most consistent supply throughout the season.

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