

Crop Report

Wednesday 28th January to Wednesday 4th February

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.

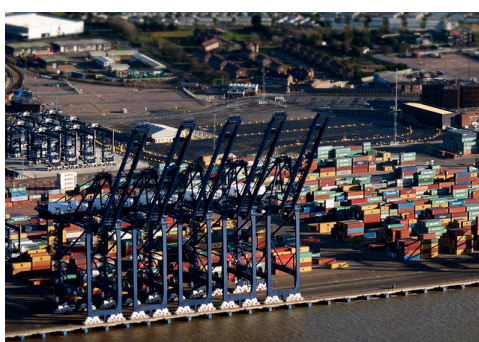
Fresh Direct Hits its LEAF Marque Pledge



We are very pleased to announce that Fresh Direct has met its pledge to only source contracted British produce from LEAF Marque accredited growers.

Achieving LEAF standards ensures that our contracted British growers are independently verified against a robust whole farm sustainability standard, driving continuous improvements in soil health, biodiversity, water and energy management to deliver more responsibly grown British produce.

Transportation



Ports - While there has been some easing of port congestion, deteriorating weather conditions have caused delays to some shipping, causing arrival dates to be pushed back.

Road & Rail - Weather-related problems and increased border checks are causing some delays to produce coming from Europe and Morocco. We are also seeing greatly reduced ferry services as high winds and rough seas make transportation more challenging. We continue to work with suppliers to minimise the impact on supply.

Courgettes & Aubergines



Courgettes are between growing cycles, resulting in lower market availability. Aubergines remain under some pressure as the continued poor conditions in Spain are not allowing fruit to mature as usual, which means that growers need to pick more immature produce. Concessions are in place to support supply.

Availability should improve as the next cycle begins, but conditions remain challenging in the short term.

Root Vegetables (Carrots and Parsnips)



Persistent rain, which is around 50% higher than a standard January, has led to products becoming saturated. This is having a major impact on root vegetables, particularly carrots and parsnips, making the produce more delicate to handle and process. The life of the product may also be reduced, and we are advising customers to keep the products in chilled conditions as much as possible.

We continue to work our suppliers to take every preventative action to limit the impact of these challenges.

Berries



The cold and wet weather in Morocco is impacting berry yields. The storms affecting the area have also seen ferry crossings being cancelled or delayed due to high winds and rough seas.

We continue to work closely with our growers and have so far managed to minimise the impact on customers, while retaining the best possible quality.

Easy Peelers



Concessions on size and origin remain in place due to heavy rainfall in Spain and Morocco, which has made harvesting difficult. Continued poor weather, combined with wider transport issues including cancelled ferries, is increasing pressure on supply.

With improving conditions expected, supply should recover next week, and concessions can then be removed.

Brassicas



Recent weather conditions—with rainfall around 50% higher than a typical January—is impacting brassica crops. This is particularly affecting cauliflower, where we are seeing some quality issues.

Savoy cabbage has been affected by the recent frosts, requiring the removal of additional outer leaves and resulting in reduced finished weights. To accommodate this, a concession has been agreed, lowering the minimum weight to 600 grams.

Salad Vegetables



Weather and transport delays across key growing regions are creating market-wide shortages. Thanks to our extensive grower network across multiple regions, we have been able to limit customer impact, though challenges may continue over the next one to two weeks.

Peppers -Yellow and orange peppers are particularly affected, as current weather is slowing their maturation. Concessions are in place to help maintain supply.

Lettuce - Wet conditions are severely impacting crops, with iceberg lettuce particularly affected.

Crownless Pineapples



Adverse weather is delaying shipping and affecting the arrival of crownless pineapples. Although the market is generally short, we have secured sufficient standard pineapples to cover any shortfalls.

Supply is expected to return to normal next week.

Eggs



Avian influenza continues to affect commercial poultry, with recent, significant challenges in the laying sector. Our broad supply base is helping minimise customer impact.

Most of the UK remains under a Housing Order, meaning birds must be kept indoors for protection. Under current legislation, eggs from free range hens kept indoors during an official Housing Order can continue to be sold as free range until the Government confirms it is safe for birds to return outside.