

# Crop Report

Wednesday 26th August to Wednesday 2nd 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 this week, with a gradual improvement anticipated thereafter. Cooler conditions in the Netherlands are helping crops recover, which should ease the situation as we move into September. Larger tomatoes remain the most affected due to smaller sizing, and this is also impacting round tomatoes. Beef and plum varieties continue to face pressure as well.

Quality remains challenging, with shelf life still reduced following the recent hot weather. We are working closely with suppliers to minimise the impact on customers, including securing additional volumes where possible to support continuity of supply.

## Brassicas



The recent heat waves continue to affect British brassicas, leaving the market extremely short, particularly on broccoli and cauliflower. Although recent rainfall has offered some limited relief, overall conditions remain very difficult and availability is expected to stay constrained.

There is significant concern that the rain is pushing cauliflower into rapid maturity. This increases the risk of cracking, sprouting and bruising on a crop that is already showing more yellowing than usual, which could further reduce availability. 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.

Shortages are expected this week, as volumes remain insufficient and product rejections at intake cannot be recovered. We are monitoring the situation closely and working with growers to protect continuity wherever possible.

A wide range of concessions are in place across cauliflower, broccoli, sweetheart cabbage and savoy cabbage. Weight reductions for red and white cabbage are also active.

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 has tightened as sustained heatwaves continue to place significant stress on plants, particularly across red and yellow varieties. Sizes are trending towards the lower end of specification due to poor growing conditions, and growers are increasingly picking more backward colour fruit to support shelf life and maintain continuity of supply.

Spain is delivering steadier yields, though 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. Current conditions suggest further impact on sizing is likely as crops continue to struggle, with quality and availability remaining fragile.

## Oranges – Small and Medium



We are experiencing some short term challenges as we await delayed container vessels from the southern hemisphere. These ships are currently expected to arrive later this week, after which we do not anticipate further disruption.

The issues are primarily affecting smaller fruit, which was more heavily impacted by the heavy rains at the start of the season, which meant fruit has grown larger.

## Cucumber



Although conditions are gradually improving, cucumber supply remains highly challenging. Dutch yields are expected to return to normal over the next couple of weeks, and Spanish production is also beginning to show signs of recovery.

Even with these improvements, the market remains tight. We anticipate continued volatility throughout the season, with peaks and troughs in availability likely to persist until November.

## Parsnips



The lack of water is directly affecting product quality, resulting in smaller tubers and reduced yields. This pressure is expected to continue into the year ahead, with lower volumes, more variable overall quality and a higher proportion of Class II produce likely as crops struggle to size under prolonged dry conditions.

## Asparagus



Growing conditions in Peru remain unsettled, and El Niño related disruption is expected to intensify through August. The instability is most evident on longer sea freighted arrivals, where extended transit times are increasing the likelihood of condition issues.

Air freight continues to be used selectively to safeguard quality and keep programmes moving by shortening journeys and reducing stress on the crop. Even with this support, the market is expected to remain tight, and meaningful improvement is unlikely until conditions stabilise.

## Melons



As the Spanish season draws to a close, we are beginning to see a decline in both quality and availability. Conditions are proving particularly challenging for watermelons and cantaloupe, where pressure on supply is most acute.

The Brazilian season is due to begin next week, though volumes will take some time to build to full strength. In the interim, we are working closely with suppliers to minimise the impact on customers, including sourcing additional fruit from alternative origins to support continuity of supply.

## Potatoes



The lack of water during key growing cycles is expected to have a marked impact on this year's potato crop, with baker grades under the greatest pressure. While conditions in Scotland, where some of our volumes are sourced, have been better and may offer a degree of improvement, the overall market is still likely to remain challenging.

Season long issues on sizing are now anticipated, particularly across baker 30s, 40s and 50s, where yields are expected to remain under sustained strain as crops continue to struggle.

## Aubergines



Availability has tightened sharply as crops begin to feel the full impact of the recent heat. Growing conditions remain challenging, and growers expect the situation to stay difficult through the remainder of the season, with supply likely to remain under sustained pressure.

## Pumpkins



Pumpkins are expected to be materially smaller this year due to the poor growing conditions. Smalls will be plentiful, and mediums should remain in good supply, but large pumpkins are expected to be largely unavailable throughout the season, as the crop continues to struggle.

## Peaches and Nectarines



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

## Focus on....British Blackberries



Our Driscoll's blackberries run through the British season from June to October. They offer vibrant deep purple to black colouring and a rich, sweet flavour profile. Their versatility makes them ideal for summer desserts, breakfast dishes or paired with soft cheeses, where their natural sweetness and gentle acidity work particularly well.