

Crop Report

Wednesday 30th September to Wednesday 7th October

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



Availability out of the Netherlands remains steady on certain lines, but the wider market is still extremely short as Northern European crops move into the final weeks of their seasons.

The pressure is most acute on plum, beef and cherry tomatoes. These lines continue to struggle, with plum and beef affected by low availability from the Netherlands, while cherry is seeing ongoing issues in Morocco, where recent heatwaves have disrupted growth and reduced volumes. Under normal circumstances Spain and the Netherlands would help to ease the strain, but both origins are experiencing their own shortages, limiting the ability to top up supply.

Conditions are likely to stay difficult over the next few weeks as we work to bridge the gap into winter programmes and ensure a smoother transition into the new season. A more meaningful improvement is not anticipated until mid-October, when winter crop production begins to come through and should start to stabilise availability across the category.

Brassicas



Growing conditions continue to improve, but there are some challenges remaining. Pest pressure is high, particularly whitefly, which is being fuelled by the warmer weather.

The lack of rainfall is making control more difficult and is adding further strain to crops already under pressure. This is particularly affecting spring greens, kale and cavolo nero, and customers are reminded that these products should be washed before use.

Cooler night time temperatures are now slowing growth, which is creating additional difficulty for a category where overall availability is already curtailed. This is likely to remain a limiting factor as we move deeper into autumn.

Cabbage, especially red cabbage, remains very tight. Concessions are in place to support availability, and seasonal cabbage varieties continue to experience intermittent pressure as conditions fluctuate.

Peppers



Dutch growers are still working through the impact of earlier poor growing conditions, and supply remains tight across the category. Red and green peppers are holding up reasonably well, but yellow continues to be the most constrained line, with volumes proving difficult to lift. Fruit is generally coming through on the smaller side, and growers are still relying on earlier colour picks to keep product moving and maintain shelf life.

Quality pressure is also present, though Class 2 fruit is showing better resilience and is helping to support overall availability while Class 1 remains restricted.

Looking ahead, the market is expected to stay challenging and may tighten further as the industry moves from summer to winter supply at the end of October and into early November. Sizing is likely to remain under strain, and both quality and availability will require close attention through the transition.

Berries



Raspberry growth continues to slow as cooler evenings set in, indicating the final phase of the UK season. Late summer warmth is still offering some support, but we are approaching the point where supplementary imported supply may be required to maintain consistent availability.

Strawberries remain in a steady position for this stage of the season. Quality is holding up reasonably well and we expect Dutch fruit to begin appearing in the coming weeks as the usual autumn transition gets underway.

Blueberries will be the first berry category to move away from UK production at the end of September. The remaining lines will follow in order as the season winds down, with blackberries completing the shift as October draws to a close.

Lettuce



Growing conditions remain difficult, and earlier shortages mean crops are being lifted sooner than ideal, preventing them from gaining weight and reaching full specification. To support availability, we are working closely with suppliers and have introduced concessions on iceberg, helping maintain continuity while fields remain under pressure. The ongoing strain is expected to bring the transition to Spanish supply forward by around two weeks, and planning with growers is already underway to ensure a smooth changeover.

Aphid pressure has increased sharply in several regions, adding further complexity. A large proportion of our programmes sit in the north west, where contamination levels remain lower and our growers are managing the situation well through proactive field interventions. We are monitoring conditions closely and will adjust our approach if the risk profile shifts, but for now supply remains stable and under control.

Parsnip and Carrots



Extreme summer heat has had a marked effect on root development, with smaller sizing and more variable quality becoming evident in early season production. The drilling gaps created during the heatwaves are expected to place additional market wide pressure through October and November, when those missing plantings begin to show more clearly in supply.

Both categories are set for a challenging season. Availability is likely to remain tight and sizing more inconsistent as crops continue to reflect the impact of prolonged summer temperatures. This pattern is expected to persist as the season unfolds and the effects of the weather become fully visible.

Lemons



Quality pressure on South African lemons is increasing, particularly on smaller sizes, as the effects of earlier flooding continue to affect crop performance across the main growing regions.

To maintain continuity, we are maximising supply across our grower base and bringing in additional volume from Argentina to help support the smaller lines. We are also planning a slightly earlier start to the Spanish season to strengthen availability as the transition approaches.

Even with these measures, conditions are likely to remain challenging over the next four to five weeks while supply stabilises and new season programmes come online.

Melons



The move from Spanish to Brazilian supply is still bedding in and bringing the usual early season challenges. Fruit is currently coming through slightly larger than standard, and concessions will remain in place for the next couple of weeks to support availability while the season finds its balance.

To protect continuity, we are working closely with growers and supplementing programmes with fruit from alternative origins where we can to minimise the impact on customers.

Onions



Summer growing conditions are now showing their full impact on this year's onion crop. Yields are tracking around a quarter lower than normal, and bulbs are noticeably smaller across all main lines.

The outlook remains challenging. Reduced size profiles are expected to persist throughout the year, and concessions, which are now in place, will play an important role in maximising supply and maintaining continuity across the category.

Aubergines



Availability and quality are coming under increasing strain as the season draws to a close. Crops are losing vigour, and shorter shelf life alongside more visible quality issues is expected to continue over the coming weeks. Suppliers are working closely with us to manage continuity, but conditions are likely to remain challenging until new season Spanish production comes through in early November.

Cucumbers



Spanish volumes continue to strengthen as growers progress through their autumn crop rotation, bringing a welcome level of stability back into the market. Dutch supply is also holding steady as it moves into the final stretch of its season, providing additional support during the transition.

We are not expecting any major issues, although conditions remain delicate and will need close attention as we move through the coming weeks.

Mushrooms



The mushroom category is still working through the effects of a challenging summer, with outdoor stored compost repeatedly proving difficult to cool to the temperatures needed for consistent production. As a result, harvest timing remains disrupted and yields and size profiles are still under pressure.

New season straw has now been introduced, and early indications suggest it is performing more effectively, offering some welcome support as growers work to stabilise production.

Asparagus



Growing conditions in Peru remain unsettled, and El Niño continues to disrupt crop development and overall supply. Sea freight arrivals are feeling the impact most, with extended transit times increasing the likelihood of consistency issues and reducing the consistency of arrivals. Air freight is still being used in a targeted way to protect quality and maintain programme movement, but availability remains tight and is unlikely to show meaningful improvement until conditions stabilise in the fields.

Limes



Brazilian supply is facing significant disruption following severe shipping delays.

We have been working with suppliers who have sourced additional fruit from alternative origins to help cover gaps. However, market availability is very limited and expected to remain so for the next week or so.

We are working with suppliers and logistics partners to maximise continuity of supply.

Potatoes



Water shortages during key growing periods are clearly showing in this season's crop, with a marked reduction in the larger baker grades available. Sizing challenges are expected to persist throughout the season, particularly on baker 40s and 50s, where availability is likely to remain under sustained strain. Customers are advised to consider smaller sizes to secure more consistent supply.