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Crop Report

Wednesday 18th November to Wednesday 25th 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



Blueberry availability has returned to normal following the arrival of delayed vessels that had previously restricted supply, with the market now back to full availability.

However, there are growing concerns around medium-term supply. Adverse weather conditions linked to El Niño have significantly impacted production, with crop volumes estimated to be around 40% lower year-on-year. As a result, the market is expected to face increasing availability challenges from late 2026 through the early months of 2027, with potential shortages and heightened market pressure before Moroccan production comes into season and helps rebalance supply.

Cavolo Nero



Whitefly pressure continues to affect UK-grown cavolo nero, creating ongoing quality challenges and placing some short-term constraints on availability. As a result, enhanced quality management protocols remain in place across the supply chain to help maintain product standards and minimise the impact on customers.

Customers are advised to continue following existing guidance and wash products thoroughly before use. While growers are employing rigorous crop monitoring, selection and harvesting practices to reduce the presence of whitefly, it remains a seasonal challenge within UK production and is likely to persist until growing conditions become less favourable for the pest.

We will continue to work closely with our growers and monitor the situation carefully to minimise disruption and try to maintain continuity of supply.

Peppers



This season is shaping up to be particularly challenging, with Spanish growers reporting significant thrips pressure across the key Almeria growing region. It is impacting both crop appearance and yields, raising concerns over the availability of Class I product as the season progresses. We are working closely with our suppliers to assess the full extent of the issue, but early indications suggest the impact could be widespread across the crop.

The outlook in Morocco is currently more positive, with substantially lower levels of thrips being reported and fewer concerns around crop quality. Over the coming weeks, a clearer picture will emerge as volumes increase and harvesting progresses.

It is likely that some cosmetic concessions will be required, and there may be availability challenges as the market adapts to the challenges affecting Spanish production.

We will continue to monitor crop conditions closely and provide further updates as the season develops.

Tomatoes



The winter tomato season has had a challenging start, with prolonged heatwaves across Spain during the growing cycle impacting crop development and reducing yields. As a result, market volumes have been slower to build than anticipated, limiting the quantity of product available for harvest and creating pressure across the category.

Despite these challenges, conditions are continuing to improve as we move further into our winter sourcing programme. Volumes from Morocco, mainland Spain and the Canary Islands are increasing, driving steady improvements in availability, quality and sizing. However, some short-term pressure remains, particularly on beef, plum and cherry tomatoes, where supply is still relatively constrained.

The outlook is becoming increasingly positive, with additional, more mature crops now coming into production and harvesting activity accelerating across key growing regions. This is expected to deliver further improvements in both supply and consistency over the coming weeks.

We continue to work closely with our growers and supply partners to maximise availability, manage the seasonal transition effectively and minimise disruption to customers. While the market remains tighter than usual, conditions are moving in the right direction, and we expect availability, quality and overall crop performance to strengthen as the winter season progresses.

Parsnips



While there are no current availability concerns, there is the potential for some challenges with quality in the run-up to Christmas. These are market-wide problems and are likely to impact both size and quality, which could require concessions to maintain availability.

Strawberries

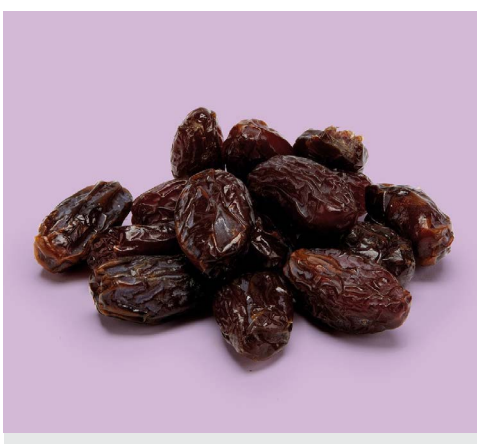


The strawberry market remains extremely challenging, with industry-wide shortages continuing as the UK season draws rapidly to a close with some end-of-season quality issues. At the same time, the Dutch season has ended earlier than expected, further restricting availability across the market.

Early-season Moroccan strawberries are now starting to come through, but volumes remain very limited and are currently insufficient to meet demand. While supply is expected to build gradually over the coming weeks, it will take time before Moroccan production reaches the levels required to support the UK market fully.

To help mitigate the shortfall, we have secured additional supplies from the USA and are planning further support from Mexico. However, despite these contingency measures, availability is expected to remain tight over the coming weeks, with market-wide shortages continuing. Meaningful improvement is unlikely until Moroccan production reaches full seasonal volumes.

Spotlight on... Medjool Dates



Fed up looking for the perfect date? Grown in warm, arid climates where our dates can slowly develop their signature depth, they are harvested at full maturity to ensure a tender bite and a luxurious, almost fudgy mouthfeel. The high sugar content of our medjool dates gives them a long shelf life, meaning they remain in perfect condition as they travel to the UK

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.

Fine beans are facing ongoing pressure from extreme temperatures in Morocco, which have driven increased spider mite activity and resulted in leaf damage and weaker plants. This has reduced both yields and crop quality, with supply expected to remain tight over the coming weeks. We are working closely with our growers and supply partners to minimise the impact on customers and maintain continuity of supply wherever possible.

Melons - the anticipated improvement in melon availability has been slightly delayed due to ongoing vessel disruption, with Galia and Cantaloupe melons the most affected lines. Size concessions are in place to support continuity of supply, ensuring no significant availability concerns while we await the arrival of the delayed shipments.

Potatoes - difficult summer growing conditions and limited water availability have reduced 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.

Red and White Cabbage availability is expected to remain tight across the market until the arrival of the new season crop, driven largely by a continued reduction in UK growing capacity and lower overall production volumes. We are working closely with our suppliers to maximise availability and maintain continuity of supply, but market conditions are likely to remain challenging. As a result, we are anticipating an extended import period at the end of the British season to help bridge the gap and support customer demand.

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Fresh Direct a Trading Division of Sysco GB Limited (registered in England No: 02035315)
Registered office at Enterprise House, Eureka Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN25 4AG