

Crop Report

Wednesday 7th October to Wednesday 14th 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



The market remains tight, though there are early indications that availability is beginning to edge forward. Even with these small improvements, conditions are still highly challenging as Northern European crops move into the final stretch of their seasons.

Plum, beef and cherry tomatoes continue to face the greatest pressure. Reduced Dutch volumes are weighing heavily on plum and beef, while cherry is still feeling the effects of disrupted growth in Morocco following recent heatwaves. Spain and the Netherlands would typically help to steady the category, but both origins remain short, limiting the ability to reinforce supply.

The coming weeks are expected to remain difficult as programmes transition into winter. Availability and sizing will need careful management, and meaningful improvement is not anticipated until the end of the month, when winter crop production begins to come through and should help stabilise the category.

Seasonal lines from Isle of Wight are also winding down, with volumes expected to taper off as their season concludes over the coming weeks.

Lettuce



Growing conditions remain challenging, and earlier shortages mean crops are being harvested slightly sooner than ideal. This is limiting their ability to gain full weight and reach the usual specification. To keep supply consistent, we are working closely with our growers and have introduced concessions on iceberg, which are helping maintain availability while fields remain under pressure.

The strain on crops will bring the switch to Spanish supply forward by around two weeks. Despite the earlier transition, the seasons are lining up satisfactorily overall. There may be some short-term challenges on Little Gem as the changeover takes place, but we are working with growers to minimise disruption.

Aphid pressure has increased in several UK regions, adding further complexity. Much of our production sits in the north west, where contamination levels are lower and growers are managing the situation well through proactive field work. We are monitoring conditions closely and will adjust our approach if needed, but at present supply remains stable and under control.

Peppers



Dutch growers continue to manage the effects of earlier poor growing conditions, and supply remains tight across the category. Red and green peppers are performing relatively well under the strain, but yellow continues to be the most challenging line, with volumes proving difficult to lift. Fruit is tending towards smaller sizing, and growers are still leaning on earlier colour picks to maintain movement and protect shelf life.

Quality concerns are also evident. Class 2 fruit is showing stronger resilience and is helping to support overall availability while Class 1 remains limited.

As we move towards the shift from summer to winter supply at the end of October and into early November, the market is expected to stay difficult and may tighten further. Sizing is likely to remain under pressure, and both quality and availability will need close management through the transition.

Berries



Raspberry and blackberry supply is beginning to tighten as the season winds down. Cooler evenings are slowing growth, but the market remains stable for now. We are nearing the point where supplementary imported fruit may be required to maintain consistent availability.

Strawberries are already in that position. Supply is steady, but Dutch fruit will be introduced at the end of the week to ensure volumes remain consistent through the seasonal transition.

The British blueberry season is concluding, with most fruit now being sourced from Peru, and any remaining British crop will be fully utilised by the end of this week.

Limes



Brazilian supply is experiencing significant disruption due to severe shipping delays, which continue to affect programme movement and overall availability. Suppliers have sourced additional fruit from alternative origins to help bridge initial gaps, but market volumes remain extremely limited and are expected to stay under pressure in the short term, which could lead to shortages.

We are working closely with suppliers and logistics partners to maximise continuity wherever possible, though conditions are likely to remain challenging until new fruit arrives.

Parsnip and Carrots



The extreme summer heat is now showing in early season crops, with smaller sizing and more variable quality becoming more noticeable. The gaps in drilling created during the heatwaves are also expected to place extra pressure on supply through October and November, when those missing plantings begin to show more clearly.

Both categories are heading into a challenging season. Availability is likely to stay tight and sizing more inconsistent as crops continue to reflect the impact of prolonged high temperatures. This pattern is expected to continue as the season unfolds and the full effects of the weather become visible.

Concessions will be required to ensure availability and we will keep you updated and work closely with growers to maintain the best possible continuity.

Lemons



Quality concerns on South African lemons are continuing to build, particularly on smaller sizes, as the effects of earlier flooding are influencing crop performance across the main growing regions. To support continuity, we are maximising supply across our grower base and bringing in additional volume from Argentina to help reinforce the smaller lines. We are also preparing for a slightly earlier start to the Spanish season, which will provide added stability as the transition approaches.

Despite these measures, conditions are expected to remain challenging over the next four to five weeks while supply settles and new season programmes begin to come through.

Brassicas



Growing conditions continue to improve, although some challenges remain. Pest pressure is still high, particularly whitefly, which is being encouraged 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 especially affecting cauliflower, which also remains smaller than usual, as well as spring greens, kale and cavolo nero. Customers are reminded to wash these products before use.

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

Onions



Poor summer growing conditions are now fully reflected in this season's onion crop. Yields are sitting around a quarter below normal, and smaller bulbs are a consistent feature across all main lines.

The outlook remains difficult. Reduced size profiles are expected to continue throughout the year, and concessions, now in place, will be essential in supporting supply and maintaining continuity across the category.

Aubergines



Availability and quality are coming under increasing pressure as the season nears its end. Crops are being affected by shorter shelf life alongside more visible quality challenges is expected to persist over the coming weeks. Suppliers are working closely with us to support continuity, but conditions are likely to remain difficult until new season production begins in early November.

Cucumbers



Supply remains stable, supported by growing Spanish volumes as growers progress through their autumn crop rotation. This uplift is bringing welcome stability back into the market and helping to balance earlier pressure.

We are not anticipating any major issues at this stage, although conditions remain delicate and will require close attention as we move through the coming weeks.

Potatoes



Water shortages during key growing periods are now clearly reflected in this season's crop, with a noticeable reduction in the larger baker grades. Sizing pressure is 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, as availability of larger sizes will be challenging throughout the season.

Asparagus



Growing conditions in Peru remain unsettled, and El Niño is still disrupting crop development and overall supply. Sea freighted fruit is carrying the greatest pressure, with longer transit times increasing the risk of condition issues and reducing the consistency of arrivals. Air freight continues to be used in a targeted way to support quality and keep programmes moving, but availability remains tight and is unlikely to improve meaningfully until field conditions stabilise.

Spotlight on...Pumpkins



This year's weather means that pumpkins haven't grown as large as normal. But fear not, there are plenty of smaller pumpkins to go around and make Halloween a spooky success. Ours are grown within five miles of Outwell in Cambridgeshire and are available now.