

CROP REPORT

Wednesday 7th February to Wednesday 14th 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.

Industrial action



Protests are ongoing across Europe and have the potential to delay shipments. We have been working with our logistics partners and, to date, the impact has been limited with only the occasional ad hoc delay.

We are maintaining a close watching brief as France is such a critical thoroughfare for produce from a number of countries including Spain and Morocco.

There are talks in place, but the issues are complex, and many are entangled with EU agreements, which will therefore be challenging to overcome.

We continue to work with logistics teams to reroute deliveries to try to avoid the worst of the traffic jams and reach the port of Calais, but the protests can rapidly change location as they are moved on by the authorities. As a result, it is possible that we could see some short-notice product shortages and delays while the protests continue.

Avocados



Supply issues remain across several key sourcing areas, with Spain and Morocco seeing lower yields, and product from Israel being more difficult to source.

The sourcing problems are being exacerbated by the shipping delays that are currently being experienced across the sector, coupled with some issues caused by industrial action across Europe.

We would normally use Chilean produce throughout February, but the early finish to its season has compounded the problems, meaning that availability is very challenging.

We are seeing some particular issues with larger fruit, with one of the main causes being the lack of water in Spain, which is impacting the product's growth. This is likely to be the case for the next couple of months until we can move into South African supply, after which it should improve.

Potatoes



There is little change in the situation with potatoes, with supply problems expected to last through the season.

We expect quality and volume issues with the crop and, while we are working to try to mitigate the issues, the shortfall is reported to be up to a million tonnes over consumption levels, which means that significant market shortages are inevitable.

There are further reports that a shortage of seed potato will continue the problems into the following season.

There are also concerns over processed potatoes, with the lower quality raw material causing problems for manufacturers, as they process potatoes. With the quality and availability not expected to improve, the issues will continue and potentially deteriorate throughout the season.

Asparagus



While market availability remains challenging, we are seeing the situation ease as more Mexican produce arrives in the UK.

Longer term, we are working with suppliers to try to find solutions for the issues that were seen with Peruvian product this year, which caused significant shortages across the market.

Butternut Squash



There is little change in the situation with butternut squash, with product quality concerns remaining high. The problems are the result of the wet weather during the harvest period, and have led to some rejections, which are impacting availability.

We expect an improvement in volumes in a week or two's time as new season South African supply arrives, provided there are no further delays to shipping.

Cabbage



The next two weeks will be very challenging for cabbage, with the difficult growing conditions causing problems across Seasonal Savoy, Kale and Cavolo Nero.

We are working with farmers while they regrow the crop, and we are taking measures to try to mitigate the shortages including the use of concessions and imports.

Grapes



While new supplies of grapes are on route to the UK, market availability currently remains very challenging.

The problems relate to ongoing shipping challenges, which saw departures delayed by poor weather and subsequently compounded by a backlog of vessels in port.

This is affecting both red and white grapes with poor market availability predicted this week, but an improvement into next week, provided there are no further shipping delays.

Melons



We have concessions in place as the impact of the early rains in Brazil continue to affect the quality and availability of melons. Especially problematic this week will be Honeydew Melons, particularly medium, and size concessions will be in place to try to mitigate the issues.

We have moved to Central America ahead of schedule and we are awaiting our first deliveries. These should be with us in the next week or so, but until then the market will be extremely challenging.

Rocket



There has been some very wet weather in Italy, which has caused issues with pesticide being washed away. Unfortunately, this has led to an increase in foreign bodies, notably snails, in washed product. While the supplier is attempting to remove them, it is proving difficult due to the number of snails and challenges in the way they are processed.

The unwashed rocket is less affected, as the bagging process means that foreign bodies are removed more effectively.

Berries



We are continuing to maintain a watching brief on berries, with logistical issues on the Continent causing concern. The main potential issue is around blackberries, but the action could affect all berries.

Peppers



While we are seeing a general improvement in the quality of peppers over last year, there is a trend towards more Class 2 product. These tend to have a shorter shelf life, which is currently the case.

Pineapples



There have been some quality issues with pineapples due to the heavy rain in Costa Rica, which was closely followed by a period of drought. This has affected the growth of the crop, particularly impacting larger sizes.

We have therefore introduced some size concessions to maintain availability. It is probable that this will need to remain in place for the next few weeks.

Carrots



There are some quality issues with carrots, which have suffered damage in the recent frosts.

Lettuce



There are still concessions in place as we work with suppliers to maintain availability. However, product availability does continue to improve.

Tomatoes



There are some quality issues with round tomatoes following the recent hot weather in the Mediterranean. This is causing the fruit to ripen quicker and, in some cases, is limiting the shelf life.

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Working together to serve our customers amazing produce and products

To learn more about our suppliers, SCAN THE QR CODE.

