

Crop Report

Wednesday 3rd September to Wednesday 10th 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.

Lemons



We are fast approaching what is expected to be a very challenging period from mid-September. This is caused by poor end of season availability from South Africa, following difficult growing conditions and flooding early in the season.

We are expecting the season to finish around three weeks earlier than normal, leading to a challenging few weeks as we transition to the Spanish season, which will start in October.

Additional concessions are likely to be required, joining the one we already have in place, which allows for a slightly smaller size for large lemons.

We are closely monitoring the Spanish season, as growers are reporting yields are likely to be down.

Mushrooms



High temperatures in Poland are causing some challenges in getting the compost down to the optimal temperature, which is leading to lower yields.

There are some similar problems in Ireland, where the warm nights are creating issues in getting the compost to the correct temperature. The weather is also causing additional moisture in the tunnels, which is an ideal breeding environment for insects such as fruit flies, which are spreading disease. As a result, third flushes and sometimes even the second flush are often being removed. This is lowering yields and causing particular problems for catering mushrooms.

We are working across our three suppliers to move volumes around to maximise availability in a challenging period. Currently we are managing supply well in a difficult market.

Cabbage



Concessions remain in place to support availability of both red and white cabbage, which are suffering from reduced volumes, with the earlier lack of water and heat affecting the main growing period and leading to a reduction in yield.

There are also some continuing quality issues, caused by insect damage and edema which means that more leaves need to be cleared away to reach acceptable quality, reducing head weight and yields. In addition, there are some ongoing problems with pests, which are more persistent than usual, although the recent rain should help to reduce some of those issues.

Cauliflower



There are some signs of improvement, with the arrival of rain helping to vastly improve growing conditions.

The market is currently very short of produce as growers try to make up the shortfall of recent weeks. However, assuming the weather remains conducive to growing, we expect the market to continue to improve in the coming weeks.

We will continue to work with our suppliers to maximise availability while the market recovers.

Broccoli



While the market remains very difficult, it is improving with the arrival of better growing conditions and significant rainfall.

The greatest problems remain with pre-packed products, due to specific requirement for higher weights. While loose broccoli remains challenging, it has slightly better availability as the weight requirement is not as strict.

As the weather continues to provide some respite for growers, we expect an improvement in availability. This should mean that the risk of a poor end to the season is significantly reduced, although this will depend on growing conditions remaining positive in the coming weeks.

Tomatoes



Production continues to fall after a particularly good summer, which provided excellent yields. However, as the plants tire and growing conditions worsen, with less sunshine and lower light levels, we expect the harvest to continue to decline.

We expect availability to be challenging over the coming weeks, especially as we approach the end of season cross-over, which is generally one of the most challenging periods of the year.

Berries



Volumes are dropping as cooler temperatures and lower light levels impact the harvest. Strawberries and raspberries are seeing the greatest challenges leading to market-wide shortages.

While availability has been impacted across the market, we are working with our suppliers and have managed to avoid any major shortages so far. However, as the problems increase as we get towards the challenging end of season, concessions are likely to be needed to support supply.

Lettuce



Like many other categories, we are seeing an increase in aphids on lettuce. While additional rain should help the situation, it has been a difficult period.

We are currently working hard with suppliers and have introduced additional checks in our depots to try to minimise the issues. We anticipate the cooler, wetter weather should help in the coming days.

British Basil



The current weather conditions, particularly in the evening, are causing some problems for the crop, with growers needing to wait longer to harvest the plants to generate the yield required. As a result, we expect the season to draw to a close shortly, which is earlier than would normally be expected.

Potatoes



Supply is currently stable, but it will be around October or November before the full picture becomes known. We will continue to monitor the impact of the hot and dry weather on the crop as there are some concerns that this will impact availability of certain products, particularly larger bakers, as the season progresses.

Nectarines and Peaches



There are still some stocks of peaches and nectarines available, but we do expect these to come to an end shortly, probably next week. As they are a seasonal line, further stocks of these popular products will not be available until next year.