

CROP REPORT

Wednesday 8th November to Wednesday 15th 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.

Supply update – Storm Ciaran causes chaos for growers

The recent spate of storms, culminating with Storm Ciaran has created huge problems for growers with excessive rain causing widespread flooding and making it difficult to harvest products from wet fields. This has affected brassicas particularly badly, causing major quality and availability issues.

The storms have also caused significant delays to some sea freight meaning the late arrival of produce to the UK and causing some short-term availability challenges.

Broccoli



British growers continue to struggle as harvesting conditions are very challenging with many fields under water and tractors unable to get access to the crop. This is affecting both quality and quantity of available product, with the number of rejections increasing as we approach the end of the season.

While there is better news on the horizon with some initial deliveries from Spain, it will be at least another week or so before Spanish product is widely available. In the meantime, we are expecting significant market shortages, with the quality of any product available also low.

We are working hard with suppliers to get as much supply as we can, including speeding up deliveries from Spain, but we anticipate some very difficult market conditions ahead for the next couple of weeks.

Lettuce



We are seeing some issues with market availability on lettuce as we complete the transition to Spain. The very warm weather conditions in Spain hastened the crop's growth, which has meant that there is a gap in supply as it is out of rotation.

The product remains behind with limited availability and, while it is to specification, it is small. As a result, we are seeing some particular issues with 5kg iceberg and are currently using substitutions for this.

In addition, the wind and rain that was seen across Spain has caused some damage to Little Gem and Cos. The growers are working to remove some of the outer leaves to minimise the issues, but because of the size issues are unable to remove all of it.

Continental varieties are the most challenging as the UK season finished abruptly. We are not expecting deliveries to start until mid-November, with limited options available on the market and availability will be challenging until then.

Tomatoes



The market is experiencing some availability issues with cherry vine, plum and beef tomatoes.

Much of the production from Holland has now finished and, while we are getting some early product from Spain, it will be around three weeks before good volumes are available. Spanish product is later than we would normally expect due to the extreme weather conditions that we saw over the summer, which meant that seeds and propagated plants were delivered later to growers.

With beef tomatoes, which take longer to grow, some size concessions will be required to help mitigate any shortages and maximise availability.

There are no reported issues with the Spanish crop at this time and we will continue to provide regular updates as the season progresses.

Cauliflower

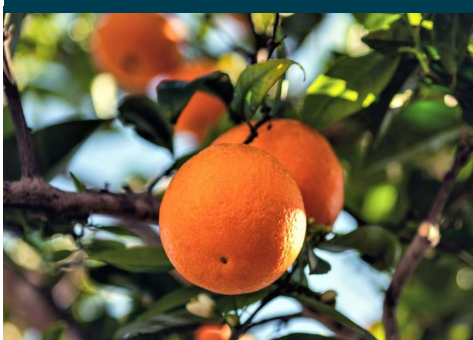


In a similar vein to broccoli, cauliflower growers are also facing the worst of the weather conditions, with harvesting difficult and the quality of the crop challenged.

We are seeing some quality issues on cauliflower as we switch between the summer and winter crops, which is adding to the reduced supply. As the winter varieties progress, availability will start to improve with the product gaining weight.

We are maintaining a watching brief and looking at options to maintain supply.

Oranges



Spanish supply will begin next week, although it will be another few weeks before we fully move across. In the meantime, we will maintain size concessions as we utilise the last of the South African stock.

The Spanish crop is looking likely to be around 30% down on last year's levels and remains quite green as a result of the hot weather. However, there is set to be better availability of small and medium sizes than we've seen over recent months.

Early Spanish Satsumas are proving very difficult with greening and limited shelf life, so we are utilising other origins, particularly South African Nardacotts, until Clementines become available towards end of the month. There are some slight delays to shipping on these, due to high winds out of Cape Town, but we are not expecting any major availability issues.

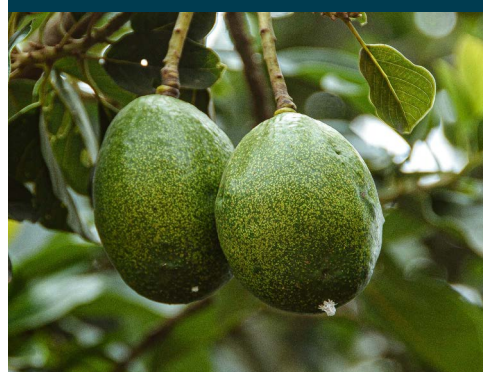
Tenderstem broccoli



The UK season for Tenderstem is also coming to an end, accelerated by the recent storms and its use as an alternative to broccoli, which has also been in limited supply. Spanish product is not yet fully available, which is causing some short-term market issues.

We are currently working with growers to mitigate the issue and identify additional supply from other origins, but it is likely that the next couple of weeks will be challenging.

Avocados



We are still seeing some market availability issues on avocados, particularly with some containers being delayed by Storm Ciaran.

We have had a concession in place to try to mitigate some of the shortages, but expect the newly arrived South African stock to ripen quickly and good availability to return by the end of the week.

Red Chillies



Availability of red chillies has been difficult for the past few weeks, with limited product available from Portugal.

However, product is now increasingly becoming available from Spain and Morocco, which is helping and we expect that market availability will return to normal within the next week or so.

Strawberries



There are some severe market shortages with strawberries, with low light levels and unseasonal weather in September bringing the crop forward, which has led to shortages now.

This is an industry-wide issue, which means that there is very limited market availability, but we are working with our growers to try to mitigate the shortages and identify additional supplies.

Lemons



We are expecting the first deliveries of Spanish product in the next week. Growers are reporting a good crop, which will mean that the size concessions that have been in place will be lifted.

Limes



Lime containers have been delayed as a result of Storm Ciaran. While we are not expecting major availability issues, we have put size concessions in place to maximise availability.

Raspberries



Storm Bernard has badly affected many growers in Morocco with some forecasts suggesting that market availability is down by 47%. However, we have been able to maintain good availability so far and will continue to work with our suppliers to minimise any impact on customers.

Celery



Celery will be very challenging for the next few days with the wet weather causing an abrupt end to the UK season, as the product took on too much water. We have organised for Spanish product to arrive at the end of this week and we are currently looking at options to address the short-term availability issues, which we will see in the meantime.

Grapes



Red grapes will remain from Southern Europe for the next few weeks before switching to Brazil.

Green grapes are moving to Brazil, where the quality is looking good. However, Storm Ciaran has caused some issues with shipping and there may be some short-term availability issues with some green grapes, but these should be quickly resolved.

