

Crop Report

Wednesday 26th November to Wednesday 3rd December

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.
Speak to your Roots Account Manager for further information

Shipping



While there has been a lull in weather conditions following the storms of the past couple of weeks, we are approaching winter, when the weather becomes less favourable to shipping. We are already beginning to see some problems with congestion and delays in ports, which could become worse as we get closer to Christmas. On occasion, this can result in vessels skipping the UK to keep to their landing schedules in Europe, which means that produce needs to be truckered back to the UK.

This can cause quality issues as produce remains on vessels and in transit for longer, along with availability problems.

We are maintaining a watching brief and will work with suppliers should the need arise.

Potatoes



Look out for our new premium potato products, which are getting some great reviews from customers. Chef's Choice Potatoes and Premium Chips are selected from high quality and high specification raw material and are available to help create some memorable dishes over the festive season.

With around 95% of the crop now harvested and in-store, availability is looking positive for the season. However, we are maintaining a close watching brief on quality as the hot conditions throughout the spring and summer has increased the level of dry matter, which can lead to bruising and other problems. We will continue to provide updates as necessary over the season.

Cabbage



Cabbage will remain challenging for the season, as maintaining weight is an ongoing challenge and concessions will stay in place to support availability of both red and white cabbage. There are also some ongoing quality issues with oedema impacting the crop.

Sweetheart cabbage is currently a mix of British and Spanish produce. This variety will complete the transition to Spain by the end of the month.

Berries



Availability of berries continues to be challenging as we transition to winter crops. However, despite the market-wide shortages, we have worked with our suppliers and managed limited availability well.

We are approaching the end of the short Dutch glasshouse season, and our suppliers are grading out more produce to maintain quality. In order to maximise availability, we are continuing to use a small amount of air-freighted Egyptian supply to support early season Moroccan produce.

Raspberries are in the middle of a transition between regions in Morocco, which is causing some market-wide availability issues. However, we have worked with our suppliers and managed to minimise the impact on customers.

Beef tomatoes



There are some challenges with availability of the large GG size beef tomatoes due to late planting in Spain and Morocco.

We are working with our suppliers and are using additional origins to source larger tomatoes. We have introduced a contingency concession for a slightly smaller tomato should the need arise, but we are hoping to avoid this.

Peppers



The market is experiencing some problems with thrips virus. This is currently concentrated on the Almeria region of Spain, the main pepper producing area during the winter. This is concerning as it is unusually early in the season, however we have spent the past two years establishing a good geographical spread of suppliers covering other regions in Spain, as well as other countries of origin.

While thrips does not look good, it should not affect the eating quality of the pepper.

Easy Peelers



We are currently utilising the last of the South African easy peeler varieties before we move to Spain by the end of the month. We have a concession in place for size, as continuing to use smaller South African fruit allows us to maximise the use of the better eating quality produce.

Grapes



As we continue the transition from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere, availability remains tight.

In order to maintain supply, we have introduced concessions on red grapes, due to the inconsistent size of the new season produce.

There is better news on green grapes, where we had expected to need a concession for colour, but quality is better than anticipated and this has not been required.

Sweet potatoes



We are working with suppliers to catch up following some shipping delays which have affected sweet potatoes. While availability remains satisfactory, it is causing some minor quality issues.

Extra quality control processes have been put in place to ensure that problems are graded out, which is working well.

Cucumbers



Warm weather in October has brought forward the crop, creating a small gap in market availability. While we are not expecting shortages, availability will be challenging. However, as cucumbers are a fast-growing crop, we do not anticipate any long-term issues.

Figs



There are some short-term issues with availability of figs as we transition between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. We are expecting Brazilian produce to start to arrive next week, which will ease the situation, but in the meantime, availability will be very limited.

We are working with our suppliers to maximise supply in a difficult period.

Eggs



We are continuing to see Avian Influenza (AI) outbreaks across the country. The Government has, however, introduced mandatory Housing Orders across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to try to minimise the impact on commercial poultry.

An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) is in place across the UK, which means that enhanced biosecurity measures are now in force. We source eggs from multiple locations, reducing the risk of localised outbreaks and we will continue to work with suppliers to minimise the potential impact.

Under UK legislation, when hens are temporarily kept inside because of a Government Housing Order, eggs can continue to be marketed as free range until the Chief Veterinary Officer says it is safe for hens to go outside again.