

Crop Report

Wednesday 9th April to Wednesday 16th April

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 Wild Harvest Account Manager for any further information.

Avocados



We are now into one of the most difficult periods of the year as we move between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

While we are not expecting shortages, market availability is currently restricted and any additional problems such as vessel delays, poor weather or longer ripening periods has the potential to lead to some short-term problems.

The problems have been worsened by an early finish in Israel along with a delay to start of the South African and Peruvian seasons. In addition, rains in Spain have affected the availability of smaller sized fruit, so there is a concession in place to allow larger fruit and maximise the limited availability.

We are working very closely with suppliers and are currently managing limited availability well, but we will continue to monitor the situation carefully over the coming weeks and provide updates as necessary.

Lemons



We are starting to see some significant availability challenges on the core primofiori variety, which is finishing around a month earlier than would be expected in a normal season.

There is good availability of the Verna variety, but these are a larger variety, made even bigger by the rains in Spain last month. We therefore have size concessions in place to help manage supplies across the range.

The problems will last throughout April, until we move to the Southern Hemisphere at the end of the month.

In addition, the high levels of humidity and wet weather mean that we have an increased risk of lower quality fruit. We are working with suppliers to assess and manage this as far as we can. However, it is likely to remain a problem until we transition to South Africa.

CauliShoots®



We are anticipating availability challenges and shortages of CauliShoots® to start around the second week of April, due to an early finish to the Spanish season before the UK harvest is ready at its normal June timing.

Originally, the Spanish crop faced excessive heat affecting the crop, which caused browning. Additional plantings to address this were then impacted by the heavy rains which we saw recently in Spain.

We are working with the supplier to try to minimise the impact of this, but it is likely to be a very challenging period during April and May.

Apples



There are going to be some very challenging end of season availability problems with apples. The early season frosts have contributed to one of the worst harvests on record. Granny Smith's remains the most impacted, but we expect to see other varieties facing similar problems in the coming weeks.

Depending on the weather, we expect to see the first of the Southern Hemisphere red apples in around three weeks, followed by Granny Smith's and other green varieties in approximately six weeks. However, it will be very difficult until then.

There are around two weeks of supply left on our seasonal British lines.

Berries

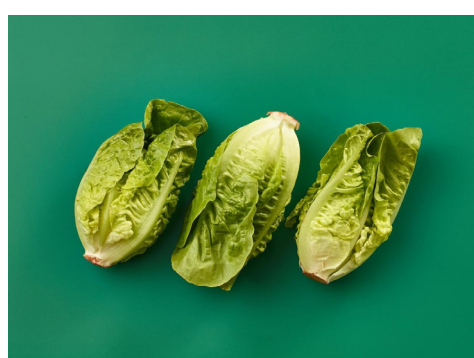


We are pleased with the continued improvement of berries over the past week. Availability continues to get better day by day and we are not anticipating any further issues over the coming weeks as we await the British season in May.

We worked very closely with our suppliers over the past few weeks, and managed to maintain good availability in what have been some really difficult market conditions.

We expect to see our first British blackberries in early May, closely followed by strawberries and raspberries in mid-May.

Lettuce



Lettuce remains particularly challenging as the aftermath of the Spanish storms continues to be felt. This is being exacerbated by increased demand, driven in large part by the good weather.

The greatest challenge is being seen with little gem, which is in very short supply. There is some improvement on Cos and iceberg has limited, but reasonable availability.

We are maintaining a number of concessions to try to maximise lettuce availability, but we expect the rest of April and the first 2 weeks of May to be very difficult.

Asparagus



We have seen some availability issues with Mexican asparagus as growers sent additional supplies to the US market ahead of the imposition of tariffs on imports.

We are managing this well at the moment, despite the pressure on the European market, made worse by the shortage of Italian exports.

We have a concession in place on stem size to help maintain availability.

Brassica update



As we move towards the end of the Spanish season there are some concerns that the storms and flooding we saw last month will bring it to a premature finish. Currently, we are watching cauliflower, broccoli and sweetheart cabbage very closely. There are also some issues with quality, caused by the wet weather, closely followed by warmer temperatures, which we are monitoring.

A concession remains in place for 5kg savoy cabbage as sizes are smaller than we would like, although this is not affecting overall case weight.

Other brassicas including kale, spring greens, cabbage and cauliflower are all performing well, with good availability and quality.

Potatoes



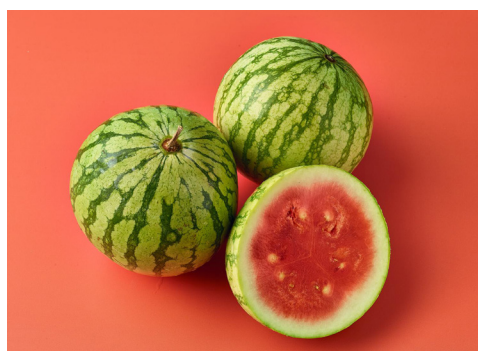
We are seeing greater challenges with quality and size on large bakers as we get further into the stored crop.

Otherwise, availability remains satisfactory, although we are expecting the supply situation to get more difficult as the season progresses, with shortages of salad potatoes, red potatoes and larger potatoes anticipated.

We have introduced a new supplier to help mitigate our risk as we approach what is likely to be a challenging end to the season.

Looking into the future, our growers are reporting that planting for next season's crop is underway and being helped by the good weather.

Melons



The inclement weather earlier in the Central American season is having an impact on the size of some melon varieties.

This is particularly affecting watermelon and honeydew melons, and we have concessions in place to help support availability.

There are some longer-term concerns on honeydew melons, which are likely to be a challenge as we get towards the end of the season in May, with growers reporting a larger than expected level of outgrades.

Peppers



We continue to work very closely with suppliers to try to minimise the issues that are being seen with peppers. Much of this is being driven by an increase in Thrips virus, which affects the aesthetic appeal and in severe cases, it can affect shelf life and quality of peppers.

While we have managed well to date, we do expect further problems in the market over the coming weeks before we begin to source from Holland in around a month's time. As a result, we have put some concessions in place, which will help to mitigate some of the shortages.

Sweet Potato



There will be severe disruption to sweet potato supply in the coming weeks, as the impact of the poor American harvest, which is around 40% down, is felt. This is expected to start to affect the market at the end of April/beginning of May.

In the meantime, we are working with suppliers to try to mitigate the issues, for example looking at increasing supply from other origins such as Portugal, but it is likely to be a very challenging period.

Mangetout



There are market shortages of mangetout following an extended period of hot weather in Egypt, which has decimated the crop. This has been exacerbated by hailstorms in Kenya over the weekend, which has meant that additional supplies are unavailable from that origin.

We are expecting the market-wide challenges to last around a week or so as the crop catches up.

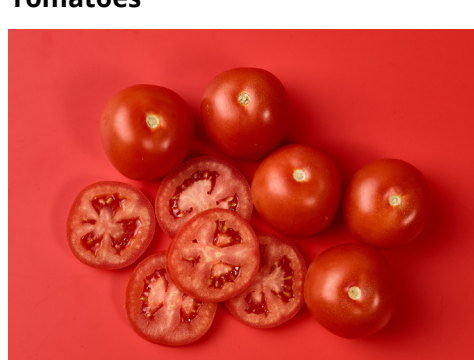
Pineapples and bananas



Due to container delays, we have some concessions in place to help manage availability while we wait for the produce to arrive.

We expect the delay to be around a week.

Tomatoes



We are seeing some improvement on the availability of tomatoes, albeit, we have put a range of concessions in place to try to aid availability.

The better weather is good news for growers, who are still recovering from the storms that had a devastating impact on many Spanish regions. However, with demand strong in the UK and with Easter approaching, there is pressure on limited supply.

Eggs



The threat of avian flu continues to be a major concern for producers. This week, the Government's Chief Veterinary Officer extended the Housing Order to cover further areas of the country. This means that all commercial poultry in those areas must be kept indoors for their protection.

Our producers are working to enhanced biosecurity measures, such as no watering on the range, control of visitors and enhanced disinfection to minimise the risk to their birds.

Demand remains positive, with retail sales currently very strong and market availability is limited. However, working with our suppliers and those across Sysco GB, we have contingency plans in place to mitigate any problems, should the need arise.