



FRESHVIEW
Foods Ltd

Crop report - July

Crop report - July

The latest updates on the marketplace to help plan menus, what to look forward to and what to avoid.

July sees the start of a lot of new season products moving from imported to our own local grown produce:

Potato

continue to be short and high priced. New season has started on some lines and we can expect the quality to improve. Prices are expected to hold for the first month and slowly drop after that, but remain higher than average - Cedric Porter, managing editor of World Potato Markets, estimates there will be a 10 per cent reduction in the land being used to grow potatoes in 2023, which could lead to a 10 per cent reduction in the harvest come October. This comes on top of a "historically low" harvest in 2022, which Mr Porter said was caused both by farmers planting less of the crop and a summer drought. He expects prices could soon go up by more than 10 per cent because of the problems.

"It's a combination of high costs and not high enough prices for the farmers themselves," he said, explaining why farmers are abandoning the root vegetable. Like most crops, the cost of producing a potato has risen as world economies grapple with soaring inflation.

Research published by the National Farmers Union (NFU) in November found the cost of producing a potato increased by 20 per cent between 2021 and 2022. The main drivers of increased production costs, according to the NFU, are rising energy costs (up 165 per cent), fertiliser (up 40 per cent) and workforce costs (up 13 per cent).

UK vegetable growers have warned of possible supply shortages over the coming months as dismal British weather delays production.

Plantings of UK field vegetable crops are "seriously behind" due to a very wet March and an unseasonably cold April, which means much domestic produce will be available later than usual, according to the British Growers Association (BGA).

Vegetables and Brassicas

- New season leek is starting at the beginning of July.
- Parsnips we will see later in the month.
- UK Runner Beans, Broad Beans, and Fresh Peas in the pod will all be available this month and will be around for the next 8 weeks or so.
- New season UK Carrots have also just started along with bunched and baby carrot.
- UK Cauliflower and Broccoli is back on track after the 3-week drought, this can have an affect further down the line, so one to watch.
- We will see Local Red and white cabbage starting in July again a little delayed after the recent warm dry weather.
- Onion – UK Season will be starting this month, and the Spanish will be moving to more set skins.
- Spanish and Moroccan sweetcorn is now available, the UK will be available in August.



Crop report - July

Fruit

Citrus fruit

South African citrus has been higher than expected and held their price so far. A series of storms caused severe disruption in the Cape's fruit regions. Flooding has cut off some roadwork networks. It brought citrus harvesting and packing to a standstill, while damage to road infrastructure caused problems for other industries and disrupted the movement of fruit to ports. The Western Cape government this morning estimated that damage from the storms could run between R750m and R1bn. Growers in the citrus regions are reporting better weather and it is hoped that harvesting can resume later this week. I think we can expect higher than average costs for the rest of the season.



Strawberries

High temperatures have led to some darker coloration at times, especially when rain has led to tunnels being closed, further increasing growing temperatures. Overall, however quality has been good and high sugar levels have made for great tasting British fruit.

Raspberries

With UK volumes somewhat under pressure a mix of UK and Spanish is being utilised with no quality concerns.

Blueberries

Spanish production is now in the final straight with eastern European sources expected over the coming weeks. As such sizing has dropped of late but should rebound as new season origins start supply.

Blackberries

Spanish supply is drawing to a close, with excellent quality Scottish fruit available from early July.

Gooseberry

UK Gooseberry will be available for a few more weeks so make use of them while they are available.

UK Cherry

This is now available, and prices are dropping slowly.



Melons

In the past two weeks, growers have contended with a number of challenges brought about by disastrous weather events, that have affected all crops (not just melons) in most growing areas. The weather forecast continues to indicate there will be scattered thunderstorms, some of which may bring about heavy downpours and hail, as they have done recently.

Crop report - July



The effects of these weather events are already evident to a degree, but will become more severe during harvesting weeks 26 and 27 (next week and the following). Growers are estimating an availability of 20-30% (about half this week's availability) and a prevalence of small fruit. The situation should ease from 12-14 July departure onwards, when new plantations will start to yield fruit and La Mancha will commence harvesting. Watermelon will move a week later (20-25 July). This also casts doubt over the end of the season, which could be premature, subject to weather over the next few weeks.

Therefore, there is a need to widen weight specifications as much as possible in order to utilise as much of the fruit that is available. We also need greater tolerance for cosmetic. There are suggestions we should lower minimum weights to 700 g in Galia, Cantaloupe and Yellow, and 1.5kg in Watermelon, in case there is a need to utilise smaller fruit when packing the orders. The hope is that demand will slow down during the next 2-3 weeks, although this seems unlikely given the weather forecast in the UK and Northern Europe.

It is likely that Brazil fruit will be imported to bridge this gap, which will take three weeks to arrive.

Salad

- UK Asparagus has now finished, and we will be moving back over to Peruvian.
- Our local mixed leaf, lettuces, mixed lettuces are all coming through excellent in quality. Farmers have been working 18hour days irrigating to help keep them in that condition after the recent drought.

Dairy

Farmgate prices continue to fall on both cream and milk. Butter on the other hand as started to see an increase in cost.

The peak for GB milk production was reached on 5 May at 37.46m litres, alongside the 7 -day rolling average which appears to have peaked at 37.18m litres. The spring flush has so far seen volumes at a similar level to last year with the peak day only 0.2% above the highest individual day in 2022.



Crop report - July

Buyers Choice – Yellow courgette



We have our own local grown yellow courgettes starting at the end of June.

Courgettes. They are a mix of two varieties – Sunlight and Goldy. They have a sweet, succulent flavour and a firmer, crisper texture than most green varieties. They are less watery than their green counterpart². They are perfect for summer salads or stir-fries. They have a thinner skin, so there is no need to peel them, and they are perfect spiralized as courgetti spaghetti. There are different varieties of yellow courgettes, such as 'Gold Rush' and 'Lemon'.

Courgette is low in saturated fat and sodium, and very low in cholesterol. It is also a good source of protein, vitamin A, thiamine, niacin, phosphorus and copper, and a very good source of dietary fibre, vitamin C, vitamin K, riboflavin, vitamin B6, folate, magnesium, potassium and manganese.

The health benefits of zucchini include improved digestion, slows down aging, lowers blood sugar levels, supports healthy circulation and a healthy heart, improves eye health, boosts energy, benefits for weight loss, improves thyroid and adrenal functions, protects against oxidation and inflammation.