



FRESHVIEW  
Foods Ltd

Crop report - November



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

### **Potatoes**

**Wet weather and slow harvest support Scottish potato prices**

The UK potato harvest is progressing slowly due to sporadic wet weather throughout the country, especially in Scotland. Currently, there is a stable balance between free-buy demand and potato supply. Growers have experienced minimal pressure to reduce prices, resulting in slight price increases or largely unchanged rates on a week-to-week basis.

Market sources anticipate that prices will consolidate around these levels before increasing as growers put their potatoes into storage. A market condition to note is the low, and in some instances, non-existent premium for English potatoes compared to Scottish potatoes. This phenomenon has been attributed to recent wet weather, which has restricted supply in Scotland, prompting growers to request higher prices and forego the typical transport discounts associated with Scottish potatoes as there is enough demand in Scotland to sustain this. – source fresh plaza.

### **Vegetables**

#### **Cabbage**

Savoy, spring, red and white cabbage are in good supply from Lancashire and good value for money

#### **Leeks**

No change in Leeks, good supply from the UK and some Spanish imports. Quality remains excellent.

#### **Broccoli**

UK local production is now beginning to drop and as a result the prices have been increasing over the past two weeks. The quality is struggling due to the wet weather, we are now relying on Spanish crops and prices remain high.



#### **Cauliflower**

The limited availability continues, the recent weather and rain has made it more challenging. Prices are still high and will remain similar next week as the Spanish are just yet starting but very limited quantity.

#### **Onions**

Spanish crops are 30% down due to the heavy rain and rotting in the ground. This is keeping prices from falling and remain steadily higher than average. Quality being sent is excellent. UK Crops are a cheaper alternative but smaller in size.

#### **Courgettes**

The summer crops in Spain have already finished and the new winter crops have started in the coast of Almeria where not all growers are yet picking. It will take a few weeks to become under stream. As a matter of fact, prices have already started to increase as the UK crops are also coming to an end and availability is less now that it has been in past weeks.

## Crop report - November

### Fruit

#### Avocado

This week the EU / UK market has reached its lowest volume arrival week in the calendar year with approximately 380 containers arriving, compared to 600 on a normal week. Hass arrivals in the EU are at a historic low, due to Peru finishing much earlier and other producing origins yet to start exporting in meaningful volumes. Pricing has increased rapidly this week due to lack of volume in the market and many producing countries having issues shipping fruit. Israel (war), Mexico (weather) and Guatemala (political unrest and roadblocks) have all had issues this week which means volumes being loaded will be down. This will mean extremely low availability for the start and possibly the middle of November.

#### Strawberry

Early November is looking very tight as we are reliant on Dutch / Belgium Glasshouse fruit, which due to the warmer temperatures has already brought the crops forward this year and have peaked earlier than expected. Subsequently there will be less volume available as we move forward and await Egyptian / Moroccan fruit to arrive. This month will be the most expensive for Strawberry.

#### Raspberry

We are already seeing shortened supply due to Moroccan fruit having to be replanted due to the exceptional high temperatures that decimated a high level of crops when first planted earlier in the season. This in turn has seen limited supply during October as crops were delayed and further high temperatures in October (+45) has affected yields.

#### Blueberry

We are experiencing a shortfall as Peruvian exports have decreased by c60% globally as you will have seen in the FPU and fruit press. UK crops are now coming to an end, so November will be a difficult period. We are normally heavily invested in Peruvian supply (Sea Freight) and Air freighted South African fruit, during November. We are already sourcing at a higher raw material cost Air Freight supply from SA and Argentina to fill the gap.

#### Blackberry

Main supply in November from Mexico and Guatemala, both Air Freight.

#### Cranberry

Fresh cranberries will be available this month. More info below.

#### Citrus

Due to production losses and climatic incidents, it will be difficult to find good quality and they will reach very high prices.

The Spanish citrus season is now underway with a lower mandarin production and a great drop in the orange production across the country. There are hardly any overseas lots left and not much competition from Morocco is expected. Prices are higher but, for the time being, they are not making sales harder.

"The harvest has been delayed by the warm temperatures. The clementine production is a little smaller than last year's, which was not abundant. Storms and hail have taken a toll on the productions in the south of Castellon, especially on the earliest varieties up to the Clemenules.



"Prices at origin are very high, and taking into account the high costs of both production and handling, packaging and transport, we believe retail prices will end up being notably higher this year. As far as oranges are concerned, the drop



## Crop report - November

in the production has been dramatic this season. "There is going to be a significant shortage of oranges this year, not only because of the impact of the drought, especially in southern Spain, but also because there is a lot of deformed, oval-shaped fruit. We are currently starting very slowly with the first Navelinas, which are arriving later than usual. It will be difficult to find quality lots and they will reach very high prices.



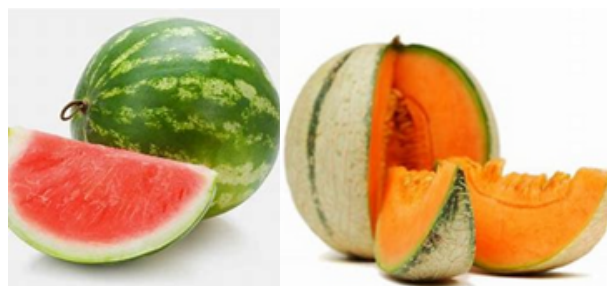
### Mandarin/Easy peeler

We are now using the Spanish Okitsu, one of the earliest varieties to start. Quality and colour is very good.

### Apple

European apples remain higher priced than last years averages, UK apples are coming to an end now. We will see Cox and Bramley apple being cold stored now.

### Melons



- Although not expected to affect availability, there is still some background variability in yield from the field on some of the melon types. Cantaloupe is seeing some reductions in yields and sizing, and watermelon continues to see small reductions in yield against expectations.
- There is also some general tightening in UK supply that is not expected to impact availability but is due to some strong sales demand against forecasts and fruit being loaded to those forecasts.
- Departures and vessel arrivals have been on schedule, with no significant issues at the UK ports.

### Quality

#### • Watermelon

Again a very consistent supply, brix sugar levels have been strong, internal attributes have been good with only the expected natural variation in colour and maturity levels, and skin finish has been cleaner with little of the scarring or healed pest strikes seen in the previous week.

#### • Yellow Melon

Is largely unchanged week on week with no significant issues. Availability from the field, internal condition and brix have all been good.

#### • Galia/Cantaloupe

No issues expected, with good sizing and brix, generally clean skins and only isolated variation in maturity levels, with an occasional 'green' fruit or softer flesh. Galia still has a background level of characteristic pepper spotting on the skin.

# Crop report - November

## Outlook

- Remains unchanged in the short term, and is expected to be largely the same through the pre Christmas period. There is no indication of crop issues from source, although pest pressure has increased slightly. Weather remains stable and it is dry in the fields. There is no disruption to loadings or shipping is anticipated.

## Stone fruit

Peach, Nectarine will be arriving from South Africa later this month. Usually starts off a little expensive and a little smaller than the Spanish.

## Salad

Iceberg Lettuce, Little Gem, and Cos Lettuce: There is still shorter supply across all these products as the UK crops are coming to an end in some growing areas. Prices are and will remain high. There has been already a little presence of new Spanish iceberg and little gem becoming available of good quality mainly from the Aguilas growing region of Murcia.

## Lollo rosso/oak and Biondi

The UK season is coming to an end. There is a few small pockets of green house left now. We will be making the switch over to Spain and France. Expect prices to double.

## Tomatoes

Availability from Holland and local UK production remain limited, and this is not likely to change from now and end. The quality is also generally becoming a little mixed in terms of condition and colour.

Mainland Spain and Morocco have already started but carry on with low volume.

The overlapping period particularly over the next week or two will be challenging due to the fact there is not enough volume just yet to meet demand. Prices are expected to continue at rather high levels for the next few weeks.

## Dairy

### Cream

Prices were reported to have jumped up at the beginning of Q4 and then continued to pick up as the month progressed. Average prices gained over £140/t month on month. It was commented that trade with the EU was good with production on the continent easing.

### Butter

Butter prices increased by £360/t in October driven by the increase in cream. The range in pricing also increased as, like cream, loads sold later in the month went at higher values to those in earlier weeks. It was also commented that volatile exchange rates over the last few weeks have helped support prices.

### Mild Cheddar

Mild Cheddar saw a more marginal uplift, up just £30/t in October compared to the previous month. Uncertainly within the market continues with limited trading and stock volumes reported to be dictating prices on a sale-by-sale basis.



## Crop report - November

### Buyers Choice – The Cranberry



(genus *Vaccinium*) is native to the swamps and bogs of northeastern North America. It belongs to the Heath, or Heather family (*Ericaceae*), which is a very widespread family of about 125 genera and about 3500 species! Members of the family occur from polar regions to the tropics in both hemispheres. The cranberry plant is described as a low-growing, woody perennial with small, oval leaves borne on fine, vine-like shoots. Horizontal stems, or runners, grow along the soil surface, rooting at intervals to form a dense mat. Its flower buds, formed on short, upright shoots, open from May or June, with the berries ripening by late September or early October.

In Maine, the cranberry flowers are in bloom from late June to mid-July. It is important to have warm, sunny weather during the bloom period, as that is the best formula for maximizing pollination by the cranberry's two biggest pollinators: bumble bees and honeybees (cranberries rely on insect pollination because the pollen grains are too heavy to be carried around much at all by the wind). The image below shows what is called a cranberry bog. There are two primary methods to harvest cranberries: dry harvesting, and wet harvesting. As you may have guessed, cranberry bogs are used during wet harvesting.

In wet harvesting, the fields where the cranberries grow are flushed with water, and a grower comes through with machines to dislodge the berries from their vines. The machines are nicknamed "eggbeaters". Once the cranberries are dislodged, they rise to the surface of the water, are collected, and taken to be processed. Wet harvesting is very efficient, but it also damages the berries more than dry harvesting.

For that reason, the cranberries which are intended to be sold fresh are harvested through dry harvesting, and the ones intended to be processed are collected through wet harvesting. In dry harvesting, growers use a machine that looks like a big lawnmower to pick cranberries off the vine.

The cranberry gets its name from Dutch and German settlers who called it the "crane berry" since the flowers on cranberry vines resemble the head of a crane.

Cranberries contain Vitamin C, which is why they were sometimes recommended to sailors in the 19th century to prevent scurvy.

Cranberries have many health benefits such as preventing urinary tract infections, aiding in reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases, and helping slow down tumour progression. Cranberries have small pockets where air seeps into that allows them to float.

