



FRESHVIEW  
Foods Ltd

Crop report - March

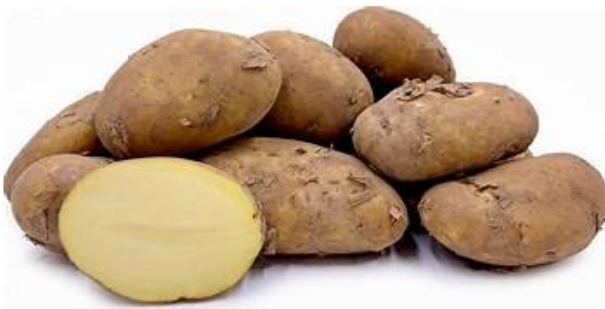
## Crop report - March

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

The temperatures in Spain are a lot warmer than normal for this time of year 22/23 degrees during the day and 10 degrees at night. This is bringing a lot of crops on more quickly than expected. This is temporarily bringing prices down to more normal levels. After visiting Spain in February some growers are expecting some gaps before the next crops are ready which will push prices up as availability decreases.

### **Potatoes**

Challenging lifting conditions due to all the rain has affected the potato seed crops in UK needed for the next harvest and prices for the seed has risen approx. 20%. This seed shortage will reduce the next years harvest and availability.



### **Jersey royals**

In around 1878 a Jersey farmer, Hugh de la Haye, showed friends a large potato that he had bought. It had 15 'eyes': points from which new plants sprout. They cut this potato into pieces, which they planted in a cōtil (a steeply sloping field) above the Bellozanne valley. One plant produced kidney-shaped potatoes, with a paper-thin skin, which they called the Jersey Royal Fluke. This was later shortened to 'Jersey Royal'

We will see the first Jersey royals this month, expect them to start of expensive.

### **Brassica**

#### **Cauliflower**

We have seen several spikes in prices recently but this has now stabilised for the time being. The UK supply has increased in production now and the same in Spain. The quality of both is excellent. Prices are expected to rise again after this flush of availability.

#### **Broccoli**

The supply of volume of Broccoli has remained stable as has the prices. The increased temperature in Spain is bringing the crops on more quickly and they are predicting a gap/shortage in supply in the coming weeks. One to watch!

#### **Purple sprouting broccoli**

This colourful cousin of broccoli can be used in much the same way. Leafier and deeper in colour than calabrese, it adds vibrancy and crunch to vegetable dishes.



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## Vegetables

### Courgette

Courgette availability is starting to increase and we have seen prices drop to more normal levels after being quite high for many weeks. Below pics of our Spanish courgette grower, we had the opportunity of visiting this February.

### Leek

Speaking with our leek grower the frost and then wet and then further frost has caused cell breakdown and disease. The freezing, thawing and wet has caused a 30% increase in labour time making the leeks ready and around 40% of loss due to the above. This issue is going to be around until April. All being well the season will finish early May when we move to imported. This is the same for all leeks and we have already seen the price rise and imports starting early.



### Carrots/ Parsnips

Further rain has caused flooding see pictures below. This is stopping some carrots being dug up and also affecting the quality of what is lifted from the ground. Prices will start to rise over the next coming weeks.



## Fruit

### Melons

We have seen a disruption in yellow and water melon from Brazil - Heavy Rains in Brazil throughout December and intermittent through November & January too - has resulted in Many Growers stopping production early.

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In addition: Where some plots of fruit initially survived, once fruit was harvested a high percentage then show signs of quality issues, resulting in fruit destroyed, and ultimately not packed or shipped. We have faced disruption on supply throughout January and February

## **Country Summary:**

### **Brazil**

Many growers stopped; very isolated pockets of fruit may be seen.

### **Honduras**

They will have Galia/Cantaloupe arriving in a few weeks (but no waters or yellows).

### **Panama**

Their first arrivals will be expected End Feb, beginning of March.

### **Costa Rica**

First arrivals beginning of March time but are limited!

Galia and Cantaloupe melons are reported to be available which we will be subbing out for any yellow and water melon orders.

## **UK Apple**

Most of the UK apple varieties will be finishing their cold store supplies; Cox apples will be available for another month or so, but expect prices to increase. Bramley apple is available all year round and prices will rise the closer we get to the new season starting in August

## **Stone fruit**

Steer clear of peach and nectarine as they will be coming from Chile; this is not eating fruit and we would advise purchasing for cooking only.

Plums are still coming from South African but are higher priced than previous years due to availability.

## **Strawberries**

Spanish Strawberry especially has been tight recently due to cloudy humid weather in Spain holding back production. As we enter March, availability should progress as the weather at source improves. There is some uncertainty over how government water restrictions will impact production as the season progresses. Quality has been generally good bar some minor botrytis given the humid conditions recently. Moroccan will also supplement, albeit with Spain the primary source as we enter March.

## **Raspberries**

Spanish and Moroccan fruit continues but with a tighter market expected during March given lower Moroccan yields coming through. On quality, some softness has been noted on certain deliveries however generally fruit has been performing well.

## **Blueberries**

We have moved majoritively over to Spanish now with the quality having the edge over Chilean which will be nearing an end in March. No quality issues are expected given the relatively short journey time versus sea freight, although pricing continues to be somewhat up from previous seasons.

## **Blackberries**

Mexican Blackberry continues with sweeter varieties such as Erendira being prioritised. Quality has been good which should continue barring and adverse conditions at source.

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## Citrus

### Lemons

No changes in lemons and availability. Quality remains excellent. Below pics of our Primafiori grower in Spain.



## Salad

There is good volume and supply coming through for iceberg/little gem/ cos. The same can be said for the lollo Biondi/oakleaf/ frizzy endive and lollo Biondi.

### Beef tomatoes

The warmer than expected weather has produced a good volume crop. With all the fruit ripening early the volume has now become more limited on the larger size fruit.

We expect some new crops starting that will help but it will be at least a couple of weeks until we can potentially see an improvement. Prices are expected to increase as the limited volume available will not meet demand. We have seen some quality issues which has been suffering as a consequence of constant warm weather affecting the shelf-life and overall condition of the fruit.

There are similar stories with all the tomatoes ripening quicker than normal, causing delays in the next crops which won't meet the demand so we will expect to see the market prices increasing.

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## Buyers Choice - Wild Garlic

Wild Garlic - available early spring. known as wild garlic, ramsons, cowleekes, cows's leek, cowleek, buckrams, broad-leaved garlic, wood garlic, bear leek, Eurasian wild garlic or bear's garlic. It is a wild relative of onion and garlic, all belonging to the same genus, Allium.

Its leaves can be eaten raw in salads, or blanched and used in place of spinach, or made into a delicious soup and pesto. They have a mild garlic flavour and are at their best before the flowers appear. The flowers are also edible and can be added raw to salads.

### Did you know?

The second half of the Latin name, ursinum, refers to the fact that brown bears loved to eat the bulb. This also gave rise to two of its common names – bear's leek and bear garlic.



Wild garlic can be safely foraged – but you need to be careful what you are picking.

There are some poisonous plants growing near wild garlic that look quite similar. One of which is Lily of the valley

Although often found in adjacent patches and commonly throughout the UK the two plants have two distinct differences.

Wild Garlic only ever has one leaf on each stem, Lily of the Valley has two. Then it all comes back to the key identifier for wild garlic – it smells of garlic! Give the leaf a good rub to release the fragrance on a cold and blustery day and put it right under your nose and inhale.



Two leaves on the Lily of the valley stem on the left and one on the wild garlic on the right.