



FRESHVIEW  
Foods Ltd

Crop report - April

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

Spain has been seeing warmer than average temperatures and good weather since the new year. This has brought most crops forward producing their highest yield stage of the plants. The last part of the season will be reducing in volume and quality will be more challenging with some potential gaps between seasons. We can expect some prices to rise with reduced availability.

### **Jersey royals**

The tunnel grown Jersey royals are available and we will see prices start to come down a little in April.

### **European Potato Shortage in 2024:**

- The European Union, including the UK, faces challenges due to dwindling potato seed supply.
- A significant reduction in seed-producing areas has been observed across the EU's top five seed-producing nations: the Netherlands, France, Germany, Denmark, and Belgium.

### **Current Situation**

- The UK's largest supermarkets (such as Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, and Morrisons) currently have a good supply of potatoes.
- However, there are warnings that customers may soon see shortages.

### **Processing Industry Challenges:**

- Signs of the shortage are also evident in the Netherlands' processing industry.
- VAVI, the Dutch processing organization, processed 10.8% less potatoes in January 2024 compared to the previous year.
- Due to heavy rainfall during harvest, a significant amount of potatoes remained in saturated ground for an extended period, rendering them unsuitable for long-term storage.
- As a result, the availability of uncontracted supplies is very tight, and processors are competing for limited stocks, driving prices up.

In summary, the potato supply situation remains complex, with challenges stemming from quality issues, reduced seed availability, and weather-related factors.

## **Vegetables**

### **Broccoli**

This brassica has remained steady in price and availability; this is slowly starting to turn around and the levels in Spain are reducing. Around mid April these reduced volumes will start to push prices up. Quality remains excellent.

### **Cauliflower**

Price levels and availability have stabilized, there is good volume from France, Spain and the UK again now after recent shortages.

### **Artichoke**

Spanish artichoke is more readily available now, see buyers choice for a little more information.

## **Fruit**

### **Strawberries**

Spanish Strawberry continues with no quality issues expected as productions peaks from Spain. Water restrictions on farm were a previous concern, however producers are now expecting the situation to remain manageable. UK Glass House Strawberries will be available from mid-month, albeit at a substantially higher price than the Spanish.

### **Raspberries**

Although availability is currently very tight, production should increase in April with good supply expected from Spain and Morocco during April. Quality and taste have been very good of late with similar expected next month.

### **Blueberries**

Spanish fruit continues with production increasing in April. No quality concerns anticipated.



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## **Blackberries**

No changes as Mexican continues with Spanish fruit expected to arrive early in May. Occasional red cell is present on Mexican, but supply has been smooth with only the occasional delay from the airport.

## **Melons**

We have seen the larger size of Watermelon become available mid-March. The level of demand is still expected to out strip supply despite overall volumes from source increasing.

Weather conditions in Brazil have stabilised, and we are now moving through the period of typically more overcast skies with instances of thundery showers. This would normally be expected and could be effectively managed, but this season has seen it limit crop development more than would normally be expected because of the impact of the previous early and intense rains. Moving out of March, the expectation would be for the natural seasonal improvement in conditions, which will benefit the crops.

Looking further ahead, the farms in Brazil believe that they will be in a much stronger position with crops that will load in 2 week's time for arrival in the UK in mid-April onwards. Field conditions for this fruit would be expected to have moderated in line with the seasonal position, and further crops and growing areas that were unaffected by the early rains will be in use.

## **UK Apples**

The UK Braeburn and Cox apple will be finishing around April before we move onto Southern Hemisphere fruit. The Bramley will continue to be pulled out of cold store until the new season starts in August.



## **Blood oranges**

Spanish and Italian blood oranges will finish this month until the first frost in December at the end of the year. Make the most of them for this last month.

## **Stone fruit**

Spanish Peach, Nectarine, plums and cherry will be starting in April and the Chilean will finish importing. Spanish cherry can be a little backward in colour and plums tend to be a little small for early season. The good news is they will eat unlike the Chilean. In May they will be more readily available and prices tend to come down.



## **Pineapple**

### **Conditions**

Temperatures will oscillate between a hot 30°C (86°F) at their highest and a moderately hot 24°C (75.2°F) at their lowest. The maximum heat index, which calculates the temperature value influenced by the moisture in the air, is estimated at a sweltering 36°C (96.8°F). Central America has been experiencing some record-breaking heat for the beginning of March. Costa Rica had a maximum air temperature of 41C (106F) on 6 March at Cerro Huacalito, potentially breaking the record for the highest national temperature for any month due to disputes over the previous record from the 1960s.



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## **Availability**

Large Fruit will tighten into April (x5/x6/x7) as result of the warmer weather at source. Demand is expected to remain high in the US and they may also look to recover volume on the use of smaller sizes (x7s x8s) if large is not available. This could push prices up for the UK and Europe.

## **Salad**

### **Asparagus**

The official UK start date is ST Georges day 23rd April, though we started a very limited amount in February this year. Prices will drop as there is more availability.



### **Iceberg Lettuce, Little Gem, and Cos Lettuce**



The volume has been quickly dropping during the past week and prices generally have started to quickly escalate, particularly on the whole head iceberg. The cos and little gem remain at the same levels but likely to also increase. The quality of the cos and iceberg is good and consistent whereas the little gem has been suffering with some external leaves issues and tip burn that can be common at this time of the year.

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## Buyers Choice Globe artichoke



Globe artichoke is a large perennial vegetable that produces edible flower buds on tall stalks. The plant has spiky, silvery-green leaves that form a rosette around the base. The flower buds, or globes, have triangular scales arranged in a whorl pattern around the central choke. The globes can be cooked and eaten, or left to bloom into light pink to purple flowers.

Artichokes are a highly nutritious vegetable that's very high in fibre and low in calories, carbohydrates, and fat. Artichokes are packed with nutrients like vitamin C, magnesium, vitamin K, folate, potassium, and zinc.



- Artichokes are not just a vegetable, but a type of thistle. They are packed with nutrients and have a unique, nutty flavour.
- Contrary to popular belief, artichokes are not a vegetable, but rather a variety of thistle. They belong to the same family as daisies and sunflowers.
- Despite the name, Jerusalem artichokes are not related to true artichokes. They are actually the tuber of a species of sunflower and have a distinct, slightly sweet flavour.
- Artichoke hearts are commonly used in salads, dips, pasta dishes, and pizzas. They add a unique and delicious flavour to various recipes and are loved by many food enthusiasts.
- There are 50 varieties of artichokes grown worldwide.