



FRESHVIEW  
Foods Ltd

Crop report - January

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

The UK government has postponed the implementation of post Brexit physical checks on 'medium-risk' fruit and vegetables imported from the EU. Originally scheduled for January 2025, these checks are now deferred to July 1st 2025. This delay aims to provide businesses with additional time to adapt to the new border control measures.

One to watch in 2025, vegetarians and vegans could constitute up to 25% of the British population increasing the demand for fruits and veg.

### **Potato**

In 2024, the United Kingdom's potato industry has faced significant hurdles, leading to increased prices and concerns over supply shortages. Factors such as adverse weather conditions, labour shortages, and economic pressures have converged, impacting both producers and consumers.

### **Escalating Potato Prices**

The cost of potatoes has seen a notable rise throughout the year. In March 2024, English white potatoes were priced at approximately £505 per tonne, marking a 159% increase compared to the previous year. Similarly, English Maris Piper potatoes reached £600 per tonne, a 192% surge year-on-year.

By December, the trend persisted, with the average price of a 2kg bag of British Maris Piper potatoes rising by 22.2%, from £1.35 in January to £1.65.

This escalation has significantly impacted the cost of traditional meals, including the Christmas dinner, where potatoes are a staple.

### **Contributing Factors to Price Increases**

1. **Adverse Weather Conditions:** The UK experienced one of the wettest winters on record, leading to waterlogged fields and delayed planting. These conditions resulted

in reduced yields and compromised crop quality.

2. **Labour Shortages:** Post-Brexit immigration policies have led to a deficit of seasonal workers essential for planting and harvesting. This shortage has caused delays and increased labour costs, further straining the supply chain.

3. **Economic Pressures:** Rising energy costs have increased expenses related to storage and transportation.

Additionally, the scarcity of seed potatoes, previously imported from the EU, has forced farmers to seek more expensive alternatives.

### **Impact on Supply and Consumption**

The culmination of these factors has led to a tighter supply of potatoes in the UK. Some farmers have reported leaving crops unharvested due to unfavourable conditions, exacerbating the shortage.

Consumers have felt the impact through higher retail prices and occasional shortages of certain varieties. The increased cost of potatoes has also contributed to the overall rise in food prices, affecting household budgets nationwide.

### **Industry Response and Future Outlook**

Industry bodies like the National Farmers' Union (NFU) have called for government intervention to support domestic potato production. Proposed measures include financial aid for affected farmers and policies to address labour shortages.

Finally, the potato harvesting season is drawn to a close, three weeks later than normal. The exceptional amount of rain that fell during October (the wettest on record in some places) caused a lot of anxious times for many growers.

This period of wet weather arrived at the optimum time for harvesting, but thankfully the later part of October and the first two weeks of November have been unseasonably dry and warm, allowing for 98% of the crop to be harvested.

Now the crops are in store the assessments of quality and size have begun. Yields have been disappointing with many crops below the 10-year average, along with many crops are described as "medium run", which in essence means the

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percentage over a 60 / 65 mm is much less than anticipated and also very little of the crop is above 75 mm

With the daily monitoring of potato stores it is becoming more apparent that the higher-than-average level of latent diseases are being seen as a direct result of both a wetter growing & harvesting season. This will lead to higher wastage levels and possibly complete store losses. We will continue to update as the season progresses  
We can expect prices to start to rise in 2025.

## Vegetables

### Onions

There is still a good supply of stored Spanish Onion, which is keeping prices level. Both the UK and Spain also had larger growing areas which should see us well in 2025 before availability tightens.

### Savoy

There is still plenty of UK Savoy cabbage available and Spain and Portugal has a later start than normal.

### Cauliflower

UK Cauliflower is still available and the volume of Spanish and French Cauliflower has started to increase in volume. These colder temperatures due are likely to slow the cauliflower growth and affect volume.

### Broccoli

The cooler temperatures will improve the broccoli quality, however prices will start to rise as a result of the slower growing conditions.

### Hispi cabbage

We remain using Portuguese Hispi cabbage, prices remain higher than the UK season.

### Leeks

Prices are stable and in good supply. Quality is very good.

### Carrots

UK Carrot is in good supply, prices remain stable.

### Parsnips

UK Parsnip is in good supply and prices remain stable.

### Red and White cabbage

This is all mostly in cold store now, quality remains good and prices steady.

## Fruit

### Apples and Pears

UK apples from the 2024 harvest remain in storage and are meeting retail demands, However there is increasing pressure from imported produce due to more competitive pricing.

### Blood oranges

The Spanish red skinned blood orange will be starting any time. The Italian tends only to have red speckles or nothing at all.

### Seville Orange

This will still be available for this month, Quality typically really drops off the later in the month it gets.

### Oranges/ easy peeler

Moroccan Nadorcotts will be making an appearance, as the Spanish clementine and satsuma phase out. The Nadorcott is a fruit with great depth of flavour and sweetness and a good acidity balance. The smooth, deep orange peel is fairly tightly adhering to the segments, but is easily removed.



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## **Stone fruit**

South African stone fruit – Peach, nectarine and apricots will pretty much finish in January leaving only plums so make use of them while you can. The Chilean season will start shortly afterwards but they are not ready to eat, very hard and the fruit does not ripen. The Chilean fruit is for cooking off/poaching only.



## **Blackberry**

We will continue with Mexican fruit and there should be good availability for the whole month

## **Blueberry**

In January we will continue to have availability from Peru – but will also be starting with Chilean fruit in January which should continue until March. The first fruit from Morocco should also start in January but will be limited in availability to start with.

## **Raspberry**

There should be good availability from Spain and Morocco and during the month.

## **Strawberry**

We will continue with Egyptian and Moroccan fruit throughout the month. We will also start with Spanish fruit in January which will increase in availability as the month progresses

## **Lemons**

There is still good volume of Spanish lemon, quality remains excellent.

## **Melons**

We are on Brazilian fruit and the quality and availability is good.

## **Salads**

## **Tomato**

The volume will drop off across most Spanish and Moroccan tomato lines with the night time temperatures becoming cooler 8-10 degrees in Mainland Spain and Morocco 10/12 degrees. Prices are likely to rise over the next few weeks. Quality remains excellent.

## **Lollo rosso, Oakleaf and Lollo Biondi**

The quality and availability has improved since the heavy rains they had previously been experiencing. The quality is excellent.

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## **BUYERS CHOICE - UK JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE**

Despite one of its names, the Jerusalem artichoke has no relationship to Jerusalem, and it is not a type of artichoke, though the two are distantly related as members of the daisy family. They are a good source of many vitamins, minerals, fibre, and protein. Otherwise known as sunchoke or sunroot, they are a member of the sunflower family.

Jerusalem artichoke benefits include a boost in iron, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium. This root vegetable can be prepared in a variety of ways. You can eat Jerusalem artichokes raw (thinly sliced), roasted, steamed or boiled, mashed or pureed, and fried as chips.

Similar to potatoes, the skins are edible and provide an additional source of fibre. It is a personal preference to eat them with or without skins; however, it is recommended to trim off any visible strings or tough ends on the vegetable.

