

CROP REPORT

March 2025

Get the insights you need to plan smarter and streamline your menus with our latest field report, curated by our expert produce team.



Meet Simon – Our Procurement Expert

Simon leads procurement, overseeing fresh, dairy, and dry goods. With 20 years' experience, he excels in trading, importing, and supplier relations. His industry knowledge is second to none, here's his March crop report...



SPAIN

We paid a visit to our Spanish suppliers in February to see the effects of the storms.

Pictures below show huge hail stones, cracked windscreen and a car roof with heavy indents from the hailstorm. We saw firsthand all the holes in the plastic sheeting from the storm which has damaged some plants and salads lines.



CHECK OUT THIS CAR ROOF!



HAIL STONES LARGER THAN GOLF BALLS!



POTATO

The survey, by frozen potato firm McCain, reveals that rising energy costs is a major concern.

Half of farmers in the UK are reconsidering their future in the industry due to a rise in financial pressures in the last year, a stark new survey shows.

The survey, by frozen potato firm McCain, reveals that rising energy (35%) and fertiliser costs (32%) are two factors as to why farmers want to quit.

Environmental threats (36%) is also a major concern among the 250-strong farmers who supply the company with potatoes.

Financial pressures are not only affecting farm operations, but are also the primary factor (55%) straining farmers' mental health.

Early Crops – Jersey Royals: There has been a small amount of progress this week but planting is still significantly delayed. The forecast for next week is "changeable" again and planting has moved on to stronger soils which will take longer to dry out. This is due to start in March.

Sellers of stored potato continue to try to force prices higher and there are increased delivered in quotes for washed whites and bakers and salads for the coming weeks.

Bakers / Jackets: have seen a steady movement upwards in price.

Mids: are holding steady with some increases for best quality.

Chipping / Frying: price will start to move next month and every month after this until the new season starts. This will affect prepared potato line prices.

Vegetables

CAULIFLOWER

Prices have eased back since the freezing weather, French import has nearly halved compared to previous weeks. Production is looking good for both the UK and imported.



PARSNIPS

UK Parsnip is in good supply and prices and quality remain stable.



BROCCOLI

Supply is good, prices are holding level now, quality remains excellent.



RED AND WHITE CABBAGE

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

LEEKS

Prices remain stable, there is also European imported now which is helping with the recent slower production of the UK.



SAVOY

We have both UK and Portuguese available currently which is keeping prices steady. This will change when the UK finishes – a lot weather dependent.



CARROTS

UK Carrot is in good supply, prices and quality remain stable.

ONIONS

There is still a good supply of stored Spanish Onion, which continues to keep prices level. This in turn is keeping the UK crop prices level.



SPRING CABBAGE

UK spring cabbage will finish over the next few weeks, and we will then look to imported at higher price levels. Standard for this time of year.

Fruit



STRAWBERRIES

Availability of Spanish Strawberry have been short in February with the move away from Egyptian, but as

Spanish production increases availability should improve, with a subsequent easing of the raw material price. Quality has been good which should continue in March barring any unusual weather conditions.

RASPBERRIES

Raspberries have been in very tight supply of late, and the anticipation is that this will continue into the early March before subsequent crops enter production to increase availability. Some shelf concerns were noted further to high rain/humidity at the end of January, however these issues now appear to be behind us with quality much improved.



BLACKBERRIES

Mexican Blackberry continues during March, occasional delays are experienced due to flight/clearing delays although no major concerns are anticipated weather allowing.



BLUEBERRIES

Most of the supply from Chile will finish in March, moving over to Spanish and Moroccan. No quality concerns here given



the switch into road freight fruit.

FORCED RHUBARB

Will still be available for the month of March before we move over to our Cheshire outdoor fruit where we will see prices dropping at the end of March, beginning of April.

Fruit

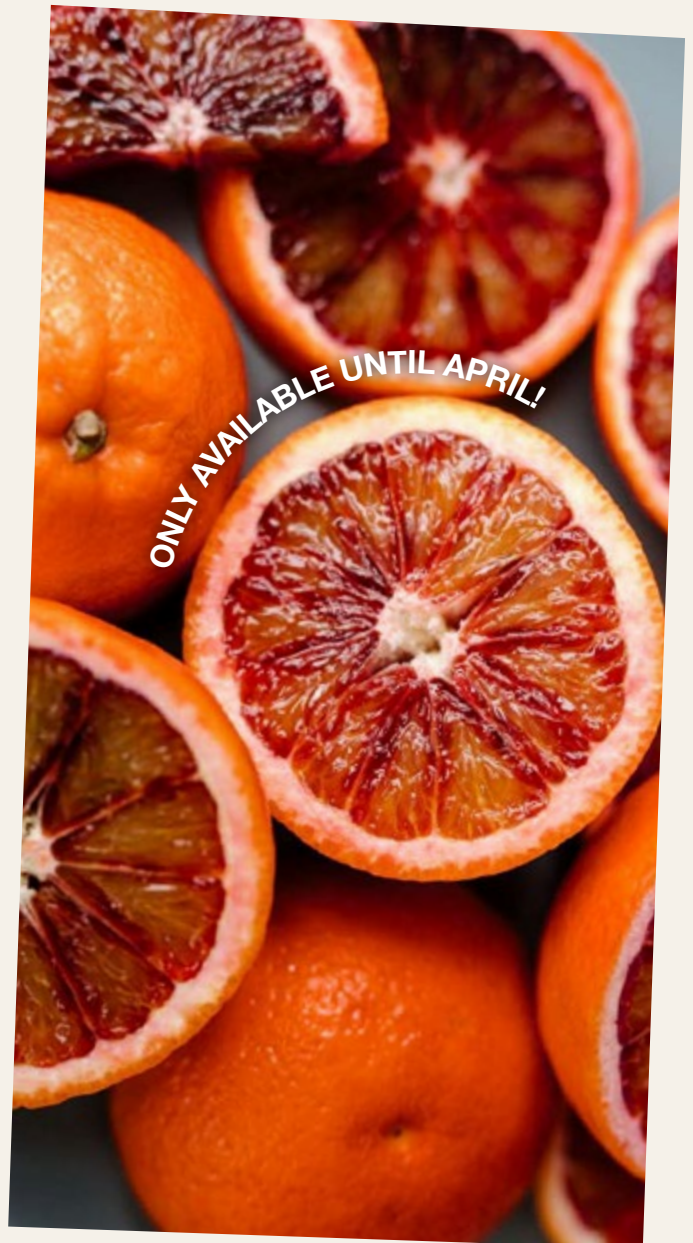


MANDARIN / EASY PEEL

Moroccan Nadorcotts super sweet to eat and excellent quality remain steady and available.

BLOOD ORANGES

The Spanish Sanguinello are coming through more red skinned and the flesh colour is the same. Remember they are only available until April!



ORANGES

Spanish fruit is holding a higher price, but the Egyptian fruit is bring all prices down. Quality remains excellent.

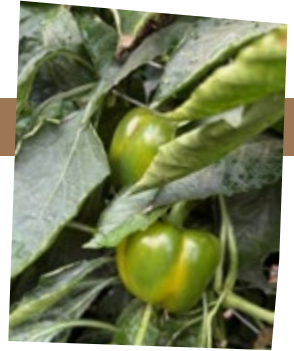


LEMONS

There is still good volume of Spanish Primafiori lemon, quality remains excellent. We continue with this variety until the Spanish Verna becomes available.



Salads



SALADS



We looked at our little gem, iceberg and cos lettuce growers' fields and could see the gaps in the fields were the

produce had been damaged. The damage along with the weather is reducing supply which is pushing prices.

PEPPERS

Growers are only picking peppers one a week, while waiting for the green peppers to change colour which is very slowly.

So saw many pack-houses with many green peppers available but very few red and yellow.

The Thrips virus is also having an effect and reducing the volume available. The early season crops are coming to an end, while the Mid-season will continue. April could prove problematic, and we may have to switch to Dutch peppers to aid the volume we need.



BEEF TOMATO



Is coming through good quality and good colour, however the volume will start to drop off from both

Spain and Morocco.

The volume of large sizes is also reducing, prices remain high and may increase further.

TOMATO

The cooler nights have left tomatoes in more limited supply and growers are needing to wait longer for the fruit to ripen up. The quality remains good and this should hopefully improve over the coming weeks.



Eggs

Approx. 1.5 million chickens have culled in Shropshire due to the avian influenza

The national flock should be up 4 million now to increase the shortfall on eggs, which has not happened.

Defra have extended poultry housing order which has come into force to curb bird flu. Defra's mandatory housing order covering large swathes of England has come into force, with farmers now legally required to keep all bird indoors to help stem avian influenza.

Farmers in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Cheshire, Merseyside and Lancashire must follow the strict rule from (16 February) due to the continued spread of bird flu.

The new counties are in addition to those which already have a housing order, including East Yorkshire, City of Hull, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Shropshire, York and North Yorkshire.





BUYERS CHOICE - RAINBOW CHARD

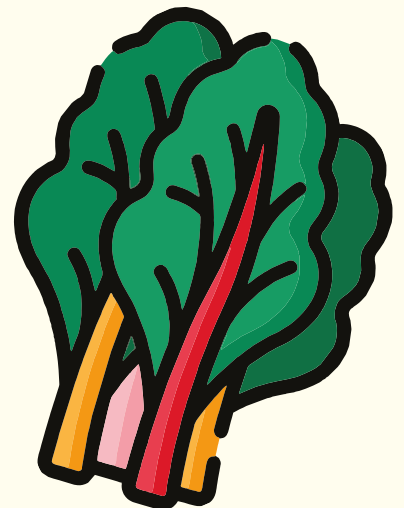


Rainbow chard is a vibrant, leafy green that brings a splash of colour to any dish. But what makes this vegetable so special? Packed with nutrients, rainbow chard is not only beautiful but also incredibly healthy. It offers a mix of vitamins A, C, and K, along with essential minerals like magnesium and potassium. This versatile veggie can be sautéed, steamed, or even eaten raw in salads. Did you know that

rainbow chard is actually a type of beet? Its colourful stems can range from bright yellow to deep red, making it a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach. Whether you're a seasoned chef or a home cook, adding rainbow chard to your meals can elevate both flavour and nutrition. Ready to learn more? Let's dive into some fascinating facts about this amazing vegetable!

KEY FACTS!!!

- The stems can be red, yellow, pink, or white, thanks to pigments called betalains and carotenoids.
- The high vitamin K content helps maintain strong bones and may reduce the risk of fractures.
- The vibrant colours of rainbow chard can be used to dye fabrics and even Easter eggs.
- Has a long growing season. Rainbow chard can be harvested from early spring until late fall, providing fresh greens for much of the year.





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