



CROP REPORT

February 2026





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 February crop report...

COLD WEATHER SLOWS CROPS

Current weather conditions continue to influence crop availability.



The mountain area behind our Spanish supplier's production zone remains snow-covered, and temperatures are still below seasonal averages. As a result, overall crop development is slower than normal. Aubergines and cucumbers are growing at a reduced pace, while peppers and tomatoes are experiencing delayed ripening.

Recently planted crops such as courgette are focusing on strengthening their vegetative structure in response to the cold. This naturally limits flowering and early fruit set, leading to lower short-term availability.

The forecast for this week shows further rainfall, which particularly impacts tomatoes. Cold and humid night conditions followed by midday sunshine can create temperature stress, increasing the risk of skin cracking and potential post-harvest quality issues. Quality controls are therefore being reinforced.

From a market perspective, no major price movements are expected over the next two weeks, with values remaining broadly stable.



POTATOES

The 2025 planted area is expected to be in line with 2024 and, despite the dry weather, early yield reports indicate that irrigated crops have performed well assisted by the warm sunny summer.

Given the relatively straightforward harvest, crops should have gone into store clean and dry.

Quality, however, is expected to be a challenge for some crops due to the increased incidence of bruising in tubers lifted in warm, dry conditions. Recent price pressure is expected to remain through the 2026 harvest as retailers try to fight inflation. More dry summers demonstrate an increasing need for winter water storage.

For 2026, UK demand is forecast at around 5 million tonnes, representing a modest 0.6% decline compared with 2025. Estimated production stands at 4.84 million tonnes, also slightly down year-on-year. This suggests domestic supply will broadly align with market demand, offering some stability at home. However, the global picture is less reassuring. China, Egypt and India continue to expand their frozen fry exports, exerting pressure on EU processors and reshaping trade flows. It comes on the back of US President so called "Liberation Day" tariffs which restricted Chinese and Indian export to the US and directed their surplus towards the EU and the EU's export customers.

Vegetables

AUBERGINES

Supply continues to be extremely limited and is likely to continue with strong prices, reaching double figures during next week.



The quality is particularly good also enhanced by the cooler conditions that benefit the crops. As temperatures are slowly improving, we would expect a little bit more volume arriving the mid-February.

Vegetables



CAULIFLOWER

Following recent frost, rain and colder conditions, there is an improvement in terms of volume although some local UK regions are more affected than others.

As weather has become stable there will be an improvement in availability and price.

BROCCOLI

The road for improvement is on track as crops overall seem to start to slowly increase production following the last recent heavy rain and some flooding conditions in most part of the growing regions of Murcia.

The weather has become stable although it is remaining cold. In consequence, the prices will remain strong during next week supply. On the other hand, the cooler weather will benefit the crops and enhance quality, but broccoli and Tenderstem crops affected by rain are also showing some issues related to mildew in some isolated heads.



TENDERSTEM BROCCOLI

Tenderstem broccoli remains readily available, Spanish rains reduced some supply in December.



We have the use of Kenyan air freight to maintain good supply which is a little more expensive, but quality remains excellent.



RED CABBAGE/WHITE CABBAGE

Is all in cold store for the winter and spring. The stores are set to just above freezing to maintain quality.

LEeks

No change here, great quality, consistent supply and no movement on price.



CARROTS & PARSNIPS

UK crops are in good supply, quality and prices remain stable.



COURGETTE

They also remain extremely limited in volume. We are unlikely to see an improvement until mid-February at the earliest.

The courgettes plants are growing slowly, producing low yield while low temperature. Availability is limited with prices reaching well up to high double figures. The quality in general is good and will improve further as the weather improve.



KALE

Cavalo Nero, red and green kale all consistent great quality and availability. Prices also remain stable.

Fruit



UK APPLES

Are still readily available — stored UK varieties and imported European

apples & pears continue into February. Seasonal UK apples like Braeburn and Cox are typically plentiful along side the long stored all year round Bramley apple.

BLOOD ORANGE

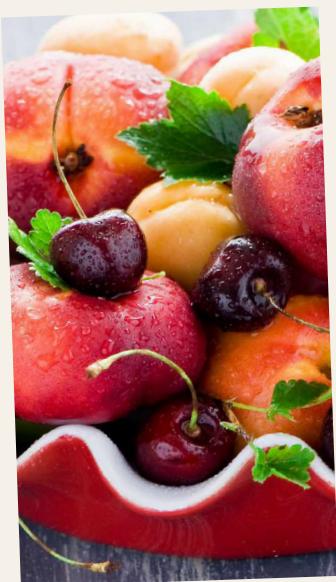
Spanish red skinned Sanguinelli is now available. Taste is fantastic.



STONE FRUIT

South African Plums will continue until the Spanish starts in April.

Chilean peach, nectarine and plums will be starting, and a reminder the fruit is for cooking only. The Chilean fruit does not ripen the same as the Spanish, Italian or South African.



EASY PEELERS

We are now on Moroccan Nadorcotts, quality is excellent, extra sweet and great quality.

LEMONS

Supply remains strong and quality is very good.



FORCED RHUBARB

Yorkshire and Dutch is available. Prices are very expensive, please call to check first.

BLUEBERRIES

After a period of comfortable supply, we are due to have shortages throughout February.



The Southern Hemisphere season has ended, and we will be looking to Morocco and Spain to fill this gap in supply.

Fruit



RASPBERRIES

Jan/Feb is a particularly difficult time for raspberries as the winter slows down their

development, and only a small quantity of plants will have fruit this time of year.

Already low volumes exacerbated by the fact the weather in the growing regions is wet and windy. The weather is also affecting transport routes, including shipping routes from Tangier closing and reopening depending on weather. Lots of delays, and not a lot of fruit. Prices are rising.

BLACKBERRIES

Mexican blackberries due to continue up to mid-April, these are all airfreight and supply looks good for the time being.



Spanish blackberries being loaded alongside so we will have 2 supply options.



STRAWBERRIES

The weather is also affecting strawberries.

Growers are not picking on days where the weather is poor, and poor weather is forecast for another 10 days/2 weeks.

Volumes low, prices will be higher.

Salads

LEAF

The situation in Italy is becoming increasingly challenging due to cold days and nights, combined with low light levels.



TOMATOES

No changes, yet another week where the overall production remains limited as the weather conditions have remained cooler both in Spain and Morocco.



The quality in general remains good although some varieties have been affected with the colder and rainy conditions over the last couple of weeks. As a result, some fruit is still affected by black spot caused by Alternaria and Botrytis. We hope to see volume steadily increasing for departures during next week as well as seeing an improvement on quality as the weather is beginning to settle.

As a result, crops are under significant stress. To make matters worse, there is currently no availability from Spain, as recent heavy rainfall has wiped out an estimated 4–6 weeks of production.

Salads



SPINACH

There will be some yellow cotyledons present.

These are the small leaves beneath the main plant, and due to the cold conditions they have grown at the same rate as the main leaf, meaning they are being picked up at harvest. The main leaf quality itself is good.



ROCKET

This is the 4th or 5th cut, which at this time of year means there will be a small percentage of yellowing.

We are removing as much as possible and keeping specifications tight.

CUCUMBERS



There is a little sign that production is slowly improving though yet not fast enough.

The prices are remaining high across all sizes although not necessarily as much as previous weeks. The quality is also holding well.

On the other hand, we estimate throughout next week the volume will continue picking up and prices may ease slightly at the same time. The week after next we anticipate a better position volume wise. Holland has already also started some pickings but very limited.

LITTLE GEM AND COS LETTUCE

Both being open crops have been subject to heavy rains which has decreased the volume available.



There have been a lot of crops brought forward earlier on in the season leaving gaps in supply. Warner temperatures will start to increase production and plug the gap.



PEPPERS

There are no changes related to quality and condition due to the

well documented problems caused by the Thrips virus.

There seem to be slightly more volume becoming available, particularly on green, then followed by red and yet limited on yellow that takes longer to colour up following the lower recent temperatures.

OLLO ROSSO/ OAKLEAF/OLLO BIONDI



Rains have affected this outdoor crop; supply has dropped a little.

Coming from Spain and France with limited volume. Quality will improve as the temperatures drop, again volume will drop a little. Prices remain steady for the minute.

Dairy News

January has brought a more mixed picture on commodity markets than seen in recent months.

Whilst cheese and skim markets enjoyed a modicum of recovery, fats continued in the doldrums even discounting the dire week between Christmas and January. High milk supplies both here and on the continent are proving particularly influential on the fats market.

Bulk cream prices continued to be under severe pressure and have had further movement. The average is as high as this belies some extreme prices seen over the festive period which saw distress loads of cream available. The price recovered from there but has come under pressure again in the past week due to continued milk volume pressure. There is a significant premium to European prices which are reported as sitting very low due to an excess of milk coming from the highest producing regions.

Butter prices are currently disconnected from cream prices in that it is not losing quite as much value. Again, butter was pulled down over the festive period but did not collapse (unlike cream) and has since seen some recovery. However, on average butter has moved again since last month. The position of cream drags the butter price down which is also afflicted by reportedly high stock levels. Despite lack of activity the price has settled into a comparatively narrow range at these lower levels. The market reported to be 'deathly quiet'. Butter has now lost over half of its value since the peak.

Mild cheddar is seeing little trade in the market but there is some sense that the market has stabilised and even tightened slightly. Mature is said to be tighter due to previous dispersals of curd and mild to ease cashflows which has supported the price for mature. Mild cheddar has regained some value with traders operating in a narrow range. Strong supplies globally are likely to keep the market in check.



BUYERS CHOICE - PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI



Purple sprouting broccoli has great flavour with vibrant purple florets.

But what makes it stand out from regular broccoli? Purple sprouting broccoli boasts a sweeter, more delicate flavour.

It has a long harvesting season and is extremely good for you – a single portion provides half your daily requirement of carotenoids, plus high levels of folic acid and vitamins A, K and double the vitamin C of other brassicas. It is also a good source of folate, manganese, and iron

Purple sprouting is similar to, but not the same as broccoli or calabrese, as it produces smaller heads in early spring, which are purple (although they turn green when cooked).

Purple sprouting broccoli crops over a longer period than broccoli harvested in summer. You can harvest purple sprouting broccoli from autumn through to early summer the following year.

DID YOU KNOW...



Like other brassicas, purple sprouting broccoli thrives in a fertile, firm, alkaline soil.



1. Originating from the Mediterranean, this vegetable has been cultivated for centuries.
2. It is a biennial plant, meaning it takes two years to complete its life cycle.
3. The purple colour comes from anthocyanins (the same as the Blood orange!!), antioxidants that help protect the plant and offer health benefits to humans.
4. Frost-tolerant, it can survive temperatures as low as 20°F (-6°C).



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