

# CROP REPORT

April 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 April crop report...

## MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT DRIVES UK FOOD PRICES

The National Farmers' Union has warned that food prices in the UK are likely to go up as a result of the conflict in the Middle East.

NFU president Tom Bradshaw told the BBC that the price of cucumbers and tomatoes could rise over the next six weeks, with the cost of other crops and milk increasing in the next three to six months.

Iran's continued blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has led to higher costs for fuel and fertiliser, both crucial elements of food production.

The issue is likely to be on the agenda when senior government ministers hold an emergency meeting to discuss the conflict's effect on the cost-of-living.

A significant portion of the world's natural gas, crude oil and fertiliser normally passes through the Strait of Hormuz, which has now been effectively closed for more than three weeks.

There is uncertainty due to the ongoing increase in production costs towards the end of this Spanish and Italian season. "Fuel prices, and consequently transport and fertilizer costs, have been rising steadily since the start of the Iran war. Cost have already started to be passed on by suppliers by way of surcharges.



## UPDATE FROM SPAIN

After a recent visit in Spain to see the growers, they have reported it's the worst weather conditions in 40 years.

The Southern region of Spain has been exceptionally wet as Storm Leonardo, the sixth major low-pressure system in 2026, hit the Iberian Peninsula.

A red weather alert has led to rivers reaching record levels. The ensuing flooding has caused landslides, fallen trees and road closures. This alert comes just a week after a red alert for Storm Kristin. With predictions showing that the temperatures are cooler than average.

While supply has stabilised slightly compared with the disruption seen earlier in the season, the combination of storms, heavy rainfall, low light levels and high humidity across key growing regions in Spain continues to affect both availability and quality in some crops.

We only have 4 weeks left of mainstream Spanish supply before we switch over to the Dutch season.

## POTATOES

UK are starting to plant the next seasons crop, 40% on the west is already in the ground.



The quality of the stored potato is having some difficulties. This was due to the very warm summer we had last year so this meant the potato came out of the ground a little earlier. 2 million people are on weight loss treatment, which is having an effect on chip shops and snacks like crisps which is slowing the market up and farmers have ended up with a lot of potato and low sales and demand.

Fertilizer has doubled in price and fuel has increased in price so farmers are backing off planting potatoes this year which will mean a lower crop level next season.

Vegetables

## BRASSICAS

No changes as supply remains in limited supply.

Spain is going through a gap in production with older crops ending while new crops are just starting.

The 2025/2026 brassica season has been one of the wettest on record. "The constant rainfall during December prevented the planting of broccoli and cauliflower, which is why there is now limited volume coming out of Murcia.

## CAULIFLOWER & BROCCOLI

A similar situation is happening with cauliflower.

Cauliflower prices have become more volatile due to supply from auctions in Brittany, France. Currently, there is very low availability of cauliflower, and prices are rising

Broccoli and cauliflower prices are expected to keep rising in the coming weeks. While more produce is being allocated to large-scale retail supply programs, prices for brassicas on the open market are climbing sharply. This trend might last for up to a month.

As the export season nears its end, the leaf vegetable and brassica growing sector in the Region of Murcia is experiencing a troubling increase in pests like aphids and white-flies because it cannot use effective active substances to control them.



## SPRING CABBAGE

We are back on new season UK Spring cabbage now, two weeks earlier than last year.

This is due to the warmer March temperatures bringing the crop forward.



## RED CABBAGE/ WHITE CABBAGE

Remains good quality and all cold stored now.

## HISPI

We will see the UK season starting around mid April, prices should hopefully return to better levels.



## UK ASPARAGUS

Starts in January from the Wye valley at a very high-cost level, the farmers run hot pipes through the soil underground to keep the soil temperature warm.

There are also pipes running above ground under poly tunnels to protect it from the frost. Costs can be 2-3 times the cost of the normal price.

Did you know that British asparagus is considered as the most delicious in the world? It's true! The beginning of the asparagus season in Britain symbolizes the arrival of spring. A cool, moderately dry spring usually means a fantastic crop. The season runs from late April (around St. George's Day) roughly until the summer solstice in late June. April will see the prices start to come down to more normal levels.

## CARROTS

Carrots will continue to go up in price as we rely more on imported carrots from France, Spain and Israel and the Scottish strawed finishes.



Vegetables

## LEEKs

Quality is looking good for the next month.

The season looking to finish 10-15th May. We will then look to French and Spanish imports at a higher cost.

Speaking with our leek farmer he has lost 6 acres due to being over mature, and some damage earlier on in the season. This is apparently not bad for a season. The previous season was 10-12 acres.

Warmer earlier temperatures will allow earlier planting and if the cold snap of winter doesn't quite happen it does influence the leeks duration and its quality.

It's been a milder March so crops have grown a little faster and sooner.



## COURGETTE

The Spanish continue currently between crops and in consequence there is a gap in production.

As a result prices remain strong. The new crops are getting under way, but it will be a couple of weeks from now until volume can increase considerably. On the other hand, the quality is holding well.



## KALE

Great availability and quality.



Fruit



## MELONS

We will continue to use imported melons from

Brazil although Spanish melon from Almeria will start in April.

Almeria is more limited in supply and demand high prices typically so one to watch.

We will move over to Spanish melons from Murcia end of May/ beginning of June all weather dependant.

## BLOOD ORANGE

This is the last month for this amazing citrus and then it's finished for another year.

Taste, internal colour and appearance is excellent.



## STONE FRUIT

This year's Spanish stone fruit campaign will start slightly later than usual, with good sizes and quality expected, and little impact from the hail seen in parts of the country in recent weeks.

Volumes will ramp up from around mid-May in the earliest regions, such as Murcia. However, the weather in the first half of May will be decisive in determining the start of the season, and if temperatures rise this could be brought forward.

Regarding the hail, which fell mainly in parts of Aragon and Catalonia earlier this month, the impact will be minor.

Good quality is also expected, with sizes and volumes forecast to be similar to last year. Crop areas remain stable for all products and regions, with slight growth in apricot cultivation in Aragon and Catalonia.



Fruit



## LEMONS

Spain's 2025/2026 lemon season began in early October, a little later than the prior campaign but still within normal dates and is set to finish now.

The Verna harvest will follow from now through the end of June. Despite a lower fruit count per tree, persistent rain produced larger calibres, so volumes could end up similar to the 2024/2025 season.

Verna output is forecast at around 290,000 tons, down by 25–30% from the record 2024/2025 crop, which exceeded 400,000 tons. The Verna campaign is expected to feature larger-than-usual sizes and high prices at origin.

### Geopolitics and logistics

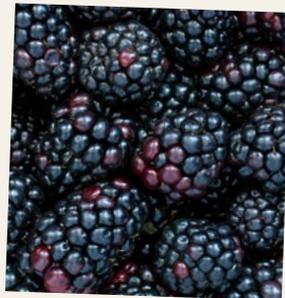
Spanish lemon exports to Persian Gulf countries are “very insignificant,” and the current war in Iran and related logistics issues have not materially affected Spain so far. Any collateral impact in the off-season would depend on whether South Africa faces difficulties organizing shipments to Europe with the outcome remaining uncertain.

### Outlook for April–June

The transition from Primofiori to Verna in April will bring tighter volumes and continued prevalence of larger calibres. With European shelves still heavily reliant on Spain and Turkish supply constrained, the market enters the second quarter with firm fundamentals and high prices at the source for Verna, pending clarity on South African logistics and any shifts in non-European demand.

## BLACKBERRIES

We will be transitioning from Mexican to Dutch/Belgian blackberries very soon, this will come with its own spike in price and will be typically in open boats rather than lidded punnets.



## BLUEBERRIES

Blueberries are extremely short.

We are anticipating that this will ease over the upcoming weeks as better, sunnier weather will foster good growth/yield.



## RASPBERRIES

Predicted to be short for the remainder of the Spain/Morocco season, the main issue cited at this stage is the after effects of a poor pollination phase.

During the storms/high winds/prolonged rains, the fruit wasn't sufficiently pollinated by the bees, and therefore the fruit is underdeveloped, or misshapen. The UK season will start at some point during late April/ early May and the prices should improve, and consistency will be far better.

## STRAWBERRIES

We are predicting a flush of Spanish and Moroccan fruit, as well as an early peak in Dutch/Belgian production.

There are likely to be a lot of strawberries available in April.

N.b. WE will be looking to continue with Spanish and Moroccan fruit for as long as possible Dutch and Belgium supply can increase dramatically if warm weather persists.



Salads



## WILD GARLIC

For those of us that get out and about, we have probably smelled the UK crop when walking through the

woods. The UK will be more reasonably priced in April.

## TOMATOES

As already reported, there are no changes as volume from Spain and Morocco is now quickly beginning to decline as crops have produced high yield over the past month.



Not only there is limited volume but also the quality is mixed with some of the older crops now suffering the consequences of unstable weather conditions since the new year. The situation will continue to be challenging between now and end of the season. The start of the summer season from Holland and Belgium has begun but limited so until week sixteen it will be difficult. Prices will remain high for April.



## LITTLE GEM AND COS LETTUCE, ICEBERG

The volume remains limited in Spain, quality is very mixed. The weather hasn't really changed for the better,

there has been more rain and cool temperatures.

## PEPPERS

As far as Spanish availability is concerned, there are no changes and not necessarily expected between now and the end of the season.



The quality also is holding at the same levels whilst growers are trying to pack and be as extra vigilant as possible. Meanwhile, Holland and Belgium are starting local production across all colours yet limited. As a result, there is more resistance on prices with red holding at the highest levels where both green and yellow are under more pressure. We expect prices to keep easing back as more pressure will appear from Holland and Belgium production. The quality is particularly good.



## LOLLO ROSSO/ OAKLEAF/LOLLO BIONDI

Quality is having an effect due to the continued rain, prices remain stable at present.

Dairy News

**Despite ongoing disruption in global markets, the overall recovery in the dairy sector continued during March.**

- Average prices increased across all reported dairy commodities during the period
- Butter and bulk cream prices were volatile, with strong gains mid month.
- Mild Cheddar prices increased slightly, but market confidence remains low



## BUTTER

Butter prices were highly volatile throughout March.

Prices rose sharply mid month, driven by short term increases in European demand, before falling back towards the end of the period as stored volumes entered the market and trading activity slowed but this still leaves an overall increase in cost.

## CHEESE

The mild Cheddar market showed mixed signals during the period.

Stocks are reported to be tight following strong sales in 2025, with limited availability of both mild and mature Cheddar. Demand remains firm, but sellers are cautious about committing to future prices due to uncertainty around trade conditions. Costs have increased a little.

## BULK CREAM

Bulk cream prices increased sharply early in the month. Freight costs have increased and global supply expanded. There will be substantial increases in April and May.



## BUYERS CHOICE - JERSEY ROYALS



The Jersey Royal is a unique potato, lovingly crafted and carefully grown on the island since the late 1800s.

**The island itself is optimal for growing potatoes, with its unique micro-climate, soil and environment creating the perfect conditions for this special spud to flourish.**

The Jersey Royal season is an exciting time for all involved, and the season begins in November with planting under glass. The main outdoor crop is planted from January to April, with harvesting from the end of March through to the July. **The peak of the season is May to June, when up to 1,000 tonnes of Royals can be shipped daily.**

Besides being unique to Jersey, the Jersey Royal carries two protected designations 'Designated Origin UK Protected' and 'Geographical Indication UK Protected'. This, in addition to Jersey's unique growing conditions, make these potatoes particularly unique.

Unlike other carbohydrates, such as pasta and rice, potatoes are a great source of vitamin C, especially the skins (100g of Jersey Royal New Potatoes would provide you with 25% of the RDA for vitamin C). Vitamin C is essential in the diet for

maintaining healthy skin, hair, bones, teeth and gums (quantity per 100g 15mg).

Vitamin B is also present in potatoes and fundamental in helping carbohydrates work properly to provide energy for the body. Vitamin B also helps maintain a healthy skin and nervous system.

It is a common myth that potatoes are fattening, and they are often banished from the diet when people are trying to lose weight. However, potatoes are actually very **low in fat** and combined with exercise, are a fantastic way to maintain a healthy lifestyle (quantity per 100g 0.3g).

**Fibre** is abundant in un-refined carbohydrates such as Jersey Royals and essential for the digestion process and making you feel full for longer. Nutritionists recommend that 18g of fibre is consumed daily to ensure a healthy diet (quantity per 100g 1.5g).

The **protein** in Jersey Royals is relatively small, but it is significant as it is of a comparable quality to egg protein (quantity per 100g 1.4g).



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