FRESHVIEW Foods Ltd

CROP REPORT

July 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 July crop report.

July is the high point of the British summer growing calendar. The first new-season UK roots and brassicas will be in, soft fruit is at peak, the cherry orchards are picking and the salad benches are running largely on local supply. There is a sustained heatwave which is dialling up production stress across northwest Europe, the after-effects of South Africa's May floods are still feeding through citrus supply, and dairy commodities continue to drift lower with butter and cream the weakest part of the basket.

Weather Outlook

The UK and Holland have been sitting in a sustained hot spell, with daytime maximums pushing 34-36 degrees and overnight temperatures only dipping into the high teens.

Spain is steady around 28-30 degrees and dry; Morocco is comparatively gentle in the low-to-mid twenties. Across the board, sunny skies dominate.

On the back of a record-breaking British spring - May saw 35.1C recorded in Kew Gardens, a new spring high - the cumulative heat load is starting to show up in the trade. Expect a yield surge across glasshouse and outdoor crops in the early part of July, followed by a tail-off and short-term gaps once the plants reset. Tip-burn on lettuces and lollo is already being reported, fruit setting on stone fruit and soft fruit is being pulled forward, and irrigation is the variable separating the well-managed crops from the rest. Worth front-loading orders where possible and building in a contingency for the dip that typically follows a flush.

South African Citrus, the Picture Firms Up

Six weeks on from the early-May flooding, the assessment is becoming clearer

The Citrus Growers' Association has revised its national export forecast modestly down to around 207 million 15kg cartons - a fall of roughly 2 million cartons, or under 1% of the total campaign. The total volume number undersells the trade story though, because the damage is concentrated in specific regions and product types.

Patensie and the wider Gamtoos Valley in the Eastern Cape, and Citrusdal and the Boland in the Western Cape, took the hardest hits. The Kouga Municipality saw the worst of the flooding. With some growers still working through orchard access issues, the preliminary damage figures may yet edge higher. From the flooded areas specifically, exports are expected to be down at least 5%.

Encouragingly, the season is running two to three weeks ahead of schedule on timing, integrity of supply to European markets has been preserved, and the bulk of the SA campaign is intact. The pinch point for buyers remains the soft-citrus category - mandarins and easy peelers were exactly the products being picked when the rains came - so expect those lines and lemons to carry firmer pricing through July and into August.

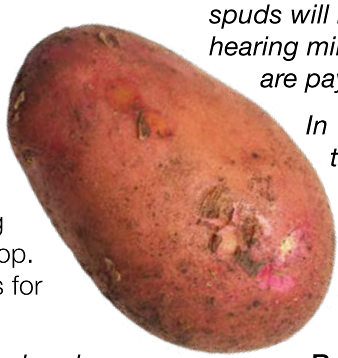
Potatoes

July is squarely peak new-season UK.

Cornish, Pembrokeshire and Suffolk earlies are in full flow and Lincolnshire whites are flowing through nicely. The Jersey Royal campaign is into its closing weeks - the harvest will tail off through the latter half of July. From late July the eastern counties step up with second earlies coming on stream and the maincrop lift will start to build through August.

Market-wise, the pressure that built up through last season's glut is still very much a feature. Free-buy values on Maris Piper sit at roughly half the level seen at the same point in 2025, with contract pricing for 2026/27 having tracked the slide downward. UK planting intentions have shrunk - industry analysis points to a 5-10% reduction in planted area, with the country falling below 100,000 hectares for the first time in recent memory and production potentially under 5 million tonnes. Doubled fertiliser bills, persistent fuel pressure and the continuing effect of weight-loss medications on chip and crisp demand are all playing into it. The flip side: retail fresh-potato volumes are picking up as shoppers respond to lower shelf prices.

On the chipping side, old-crop stocks are essentially worked through. Where bold sizing and fry colour matter, we are firmly on new crop. Markies and Agria remain the best performers for caterers needing to bridge old to new.



"Tens of thousands of tonnes of spuds have already been dumped and far more will be dumped. It grieves me to say it, but hundreds of thousands of tonnes of UK spuds will be dumped this year. On the Continent, we're hearing millions of tonnes and, in some countries, growers are paying around €25/tonne to dump.

In 1974, British households were buying more than 1.3kg of fresh potatoes a week. By 2024, that was down to 326g. During the same period, purchases of processed potatoes, including chips and crisps, rose from 119g to 225g. However, even this is down from a high of 286g in 1996."

Reported by Tim O'Malley - Nationwide produce.

Vegetables

Asparagus

British season is done.

We have switched back to Peruvian air-freight for July and the rest of the summer. Quality is good but pricing reflects the airfreight. There has been some quality issues with new season causing delays, hopefully this will resolve.

Cauliflower

UK production has steadied off the back of the recent warm spell.

Polish imported is still in the trade and looking smart. Pricing has nudged up modestly and is holding at that mark.

Aubergines

Dutch and Belgian glasshouse volumes have dropped back over the past fortnight and pricing has firmed.

The heatwave will keep that pressure on. Quality is still very good - we do not expect dramatic change in the price band this month.

Tenderstem Broccoli

UK is fully in flow, replacing the Kenyan and Spanish cover used through the brassica gap.

Pricing has settled at sensible summer levels.

Broccoli

British supply is fully on stream now.

Lincolnshire and Lancashire are picking heavily and Scottish blocks are joining in. The earlier Spanish supply out of the inland Albacete region has now wound up. Quality is good and pricing has stabilised at competitive summer levels.

Spring / Sweetheart Cabbage

UK Sweetheart continues in good shape with strong quality

Our Lancashire spring cabbage will run alongside through summer.

Vegetables

Cabbage - Green / White / Red / Savoy

British green and white are now exceptionally good with production stepping up week on week.

Savoy is improving more slowly and remains the tightest in the family. New-season UK red and white cabbage starts to be cut from mid-July onwards. Imported Spanish and Portuguese is still supplementing but Portuguese supply is still constrained from the winter floods. Pricing is broadly stable.

Hispi

UK Hispi is well established at sensible summer levels.

The hot spell is the variable to watch - eastern-England growers have been irrigating since the spring, and a prolonged heat run could put tension back into pricing.

Celery

Spanish has finished.

The UK season started well and is building volume by the week. Quality is very good, pricing is steady.

Leeks

UK new-season has begun in the earliest blocks and volumes will improve through July.

Imported French and Spanish leek is still helping the supply line until UK is fully in stride - pricing should ease modestly through the month.

Carrots

We have moved back across to UK new-season - the Suffolk pick started mid-June and is in proper flow.

Quality is very good and pricing is easing back from the import-heavy band of late spring. The previous UK crop had a better extended season than the year before, which has limited early-import demand.

Parsnips

UK new-season parsnip will be back.

Pricing will settle through July as availability builds.

Courgette

Spanish supply remains steady at competitive levels although volumes will ease through July as the spring crop winds down and new summer plantings come through.

UK local production is good - the warm conditions have brought yields on quickly. Dutch is producing nicely as well. Quality across origins is excellent.

Onions

UK old-crop is finished

The UK season started well and is building volume by the week. Quality is very good, pricing is steady.

English Kale

Plentiful and excellent quality. No issues to flag.

Vegetables

Beans and Peas

UK runner beans, broad beans and fresh peas in the pod are now in season and will run for the next couple of months - a brilliant addition to summer menus.

Globe Artichokes

Spanish artichokes continue with very good quality.

Salads

Tomatoes

Dutch and Belgian glasshouse crops are still doing the heavy lifting through July.

Dutch and Belgian glasshouse crops are still doing the heavy lifting through July. The heatwave makes the variety-by-variety picture more interesting than usual: yields will be pulled forward and then dropped, with the second half of the month likely to feel tighter than the first.

Standard Loose Round - Dutch and Belgian volumes are good and quality is solid. The heatwave will accelerate ripening and front-load production - plan for a probable gap in the back half of July.

Intense Plum - Steady supply across Belgium and Holland with quality excellent. Pricing should hold.

Beef Tomatoes - Volumes remain good across Holland and Belgium, with pricing competitive. Strong southern-European demand could push values up if the heat persists. Quality is excellent.

Plum Tomatoes - Stable volumes across Holland and Belgium - enough to meet demand without being plentiful. Quality is exceptionally good.

Vine Tomatoes - Good supply at competitive prices. Sizing is running large and quality is exceptional.

Cherry on the Vine & Cocktail - Cherry on the vine is well supplied across all varieties at steady pricing. Cocktail is shorter and carries a premium. Flavour and brix are improving across the premium lines.

Heritage / Inca - Dutch, Belgian and UK - particularly the Isle of Wight - are all contributing. Pricing has eased back slightly from earlier in the year and is holding at the current level. Westlands in Evesham's heritage fruit is at the very top of its game and is well worth featuring.

Cherry & Baby Plum - Spanish cherry availability has eased through the seasonal hand-over from coastal blocks to the inland Granada plantings. Baby plum remains better stocked. Dutch supply is decent. Quality across origins is good.

Peppers

Standard Bell Peppers - Yields across Holland, Belgium and UK have come back this past week or two after a heavy production run. All colours have firmed, with red and green over benchmark and yellow just below. Quality is good with the only minor flag being mixed colouration on some reds caused by rapid temperature change. Pricing is set to hold across the colour spread.

Sweet Pointed / Ramiro - Dutch and Belgian volume is steady. Spanish summer crops are slowly building and UK local production now contributes a decent share. Quality is good across origins. Prices have eased back and look to have found a floor.

Sweet Bite - Holland is supplying steady volumes of excellent fruit. Demand is firm and pricing is unchanged.

Padron, Habanero, Jalapeno & Chillies - Spain and Morocco have decent steady supply with volumes set to begin tapering from the second half of the month. Red chillies remain pricier than green, with green the more competitive option. Padron is gradually improving as summer crops come on. Jalapeno from Spain and Morocco is at decent volume and competitive prices, with habanero stable. Dutch yields are increasing on most lines except padron.

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Salads

Cucumbers

Following several weeks of plentiful Dutch and UK supply at competitive prices, volumes have eased back and pricing has firmed across all sizes.

The heat will keep that dynamic in place through the first half of July. Quality remains excellent.

Iceberg, Little Gem & Cos

The warm weather pulled a flush of UK and Dutch production over recent weeks which has now worked its way through

Crops are easing back at the same time as demand is firming, and pricing is starting to climb across all three lines. Tip-burn is showing on the most heat-exposed lettuces. Quality on what is making it through is excellent.

Lollo Rosso, Oakleaf & Lollo Biondi

Our Cheshire grower at Woodlands is in full outdoor flow.

Some tip-burn from the heat has been reported but supply is unaffected. UK cover is in place through early autumn.

Mixed Leaf & Baby Leaf

Steady UK and Italian supply across rocket, spinach, chard and the speciality leaves. Quality is very good.

Spinach

British spinach is in its prime. Italian is on standby for any peak-demand top-up.

Fruit

Lemons

Spanish Verna has now closed and we are wholly on Southern Hemisphere fruit.

South African opening prices have come in above last year and the residual disruption from the Eastern Cape flooding means SA volumes will not fill the void left by the smaller Spanish crop as quickly as growers had planned. Argentinian fruit continues to land in clean condition and is the most reliable performer in the mix right now. Turkey is still subdued from the spring 2025 frost damage.

Iran-related freight uncertainty around the Gulf is still nudging container costs and routing decisions, even though South African shipments themselves do not transit Hormuz. The net of all that is firm landed pricing, longer-than-typical lead times, and a need to flag specific calibre requirements early - SA sizing is running normal but Spanish leftovers from the late Verna season have tended to large.

Fruit

Strawberries

British strawberries are at the absolute peak.

The early heat brought volumes forward and growers are reporting yields well above the year before. Retailer intake has been running materially higher than 2025 throughout the spring. Watch for promotional activity from the multiples if we get another prolonged heat spike - it tends to drive a quick volume surge.

Raspberries

UK fruit is now flowing well, supported by the back end of Spanish/ Moroccan supply.

Quality is good off the back of the strong fruit set in spring.

Blueberries

Spanish has finished.

UK joins this month, with Portuguese and Eastern European fruit running alongside through the back half of July. Quality is good across origins.

Blackberries

British production continues to build through the month with sweet eating varieties leading the way.

Belgian, Dutch and Scottish open-punnet fruit are also in the mix.

Cherries

Spanish cherries are still flowing alongside the building UK season.

The 2026 British cherry crop is forecast at around 8,000 tonnes - a touch under the exceptional 2025 peak but still a strong volume year by historic standards. Around 60% of UK production comes out of Kent and the South East, with the West Midlands taking another quarter. Opening prices have already begun to ease from their early-June high and will continue to come back as supply builds. July is the peak month - worth promoting through this window.

Stone Fruit

Spanish peach, nectarine, apricot and platerina (donut peach) are all in full flow.

Catalonia is forecasting nectarine volumes in line with last year and a modest lift in peaches. The cool spring delivered excellent chill hours and the eating quality is showing it. Pricing eases through July as availability climbs.

Plums

Spanish red plums (Red Beauty especially) are in full flow.

Yellow plums (Santa Rosa and others) are still climbing and remain the tighter end of the category. Medium sizes hold pricing best; smaller sizes are more competitive.

Gooseberries

British outdoor gooseberries continue - the season has only a few more weeks to run.

Fruit

Rhubarb

British outdoor rhubarb is still flowing through July.

Damsons

Early UK damsons will start coming through at the end of the month - sizing this year may be a touch smaller depending on how much rain we get in the final growing stretch.

Melons

Watermelon - Spanish supply is excellent. Stripy seedless is plentiful, with black seedless tighter and pricier. Almeria is winding down but Murcia volumes are climbing fast. Quality and brix are very good. Strong demand on the back of the heat is supporting prices.

Honeydew - Tight supply with pricing firm on the favoured medium-to-large sizes. Smaller, longer-count fruit is more available and more competitively priced. Murcia is replacing Almeria as the main supplier through July. Quality is very good.

Galia - A tight market - Almeria essentially finished and Murcia just opening up. Favoured 5s and 6s are scarce and firm; smaller counts are more available and competitively priced.

Cantaloupe - Premium and limited - prices have pushed considerably higher over the past two weeks and the climate conditions are unlikely to change that. Smaller, sweeter fruit is in particular demand.

Oranges

Southern Hemisphere supply is in full play.

South African navels carry the workload, though the Eastern Cape flooding has clipped early-season volumes and firmed pricing through July. Argentinian and Egyptian fruit is helping. Quality of arriving fruit is good.

Easy Peelers

Peru and South Africa only.

The SA soft-citrus impact from the floods is most directly felt here - expect volume and pricing to stay tighter than usual through July. Peruvian fruit is filling more of the slot.

Grapefruit

South African dominates, with the flood disruption adding uncertainty to the back of the campaign. Pricing remains firmer than typical.

Limes

Brazilian limes are steady and reasonable. No flags

Apples

On Southern Hemisphere through July

Western Cape apple orchards took damage in the May storms and the late-season SA volumes will be reduced as a result. Chilean and New Zealand fruit are bridging. UK and French new-season come back into the mix from August.

Pears

Argentinian and South African continue through July with good quality.

Fruit

Avocados

Peruvian supply is in good shape and ramping.

Sizing skews large - smaller calibres remain the pricier end. Dry matter is good and ripening is well-behaved.

Pineapples

Costa Rican supply is consistent on both volume and eating quality.

Mango

Dominican Republic continues with Kent variety.

Keitt from Brazil and Egypt takes over through the back of the month.

Grapes

South African is finished; Western Cape vineyard damage will register through the year's tail data.

Spanish, Italian and Egyptian early-season fruit is now arriving - a short, firmer transitional window through July before volume picks up.

Eggs

UK supply remains tighter than the pre-2024 norm.

Avian influenza is still in the background, although detections have continued to slow through the first half of 2026 and production is gradually rebuilding. The squeeze is most visible on larger size grades, and spring demand has stayed firm. Worth ordering early into busy trading weekends.

Dairy News

The dairy commodity picture has continued to soften.

Butter has extended the downward trend that established itself through April and May, with the most recent move being a further notable step lower - the market has now given back all of the gains made in early 2026 and is trading at multi-year lows. Bulk cream has been broadly sideways at depressed levels, with the monthly average little changed despite plenty of intra-month volatility. Mild Cheddar has also slipped, although by a smaller margin than the fats.

The Global Dairy Trade events through May reinforced the picture: butter and Cheddar both down again, with skimmed and whole milk powders the only categories showing growth. The drivers have not changed - strong spring milk volumes here and on the Continent, softer European demand, and ongoing geopolitical strain on export confidence - but the cumulative effect is that fats are now leading the market lower.

Practical read for July: butter and cream pricing should continue to ease if these conditions hold. Cheese has come off its highs but stocks of mild Cheddar are reportedly tight after a strong 2025 trading year, so any decline there will likely be modest. A renewed Middle East flare-up or hot, dry conditions damping summer milk yields are the obvious watch points.

BUYERS CHOICE - UK CHERRIES

DID YOU KNOW!!!

UK CHERRY PRODUCTION HAS ROUGHLY QUADRUPLED OVER THE PAST DECADE - A REMARKABLE INDUSTRY COMEBACK STORY.

July is cherry month in Britain.

The country's growers have transformed this category over the past two decades - dwarf rootstock, polytunnel cover and modern variety selection have lengthened the season, lifted the eating quality and pulled production back from near-extinction. The 2026 forecast is around 8,000 tonnes - roughly four times the 2018 harvest - and the early indications are that the warm, bright spring has set the fruit up beautifully.

Kent and the South East still produce around six in every ten British cherries, with the West Midlands - Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire - making up roughly a quarter. The protected-tunnel approach has essentially recreated a Mediterranean microclimate over UK orchards, allowing growers to pick by hand from ground level rather than off ladders and to keep the fruit safe from the worst of British weather.

Did you know?

- The British season now runs from June to late August thanks to mid-season varietal selection in the West Midlands.
- A cherry is technically a drupe - a stone fruit - not a berry; its closest relatives are plums, peaches and almonds.
- It takes around 250 cherries to produce a single pound of dried fruit.
- Cherries are one of the few fruits naturally rich in melatonin, the sleep-regulation hormone - hence the perennial cherries-help-you-sleep folk wisdom that has at least some scientific basis.

CULINARY USES

- Stoned and folded into a clafoutis - the classic French summer dessert.
- Roasted briefly with thyme and red wine vinegar as a topping for duck or pork.
- Paired with goats' cheese and rocket in summer salads with cracked black pepper.
- Made into a quick compote with a touch of kirsch for breakfast yoghurt or ice cream.
- Pickled to cut through rich charcuterie boards.

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