CROP REPORT

August 2026

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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 August crop report.

August brings relief as the UK heatwave eases, though weeks of sustained heat have already strained crops, irrigation, and harvesting schedules. Brassica growers face severe impacts, with a notable gap in winter cauliflower supplies expected later this year. On a brighter note, British soft fruit boasts exceptional quality, and local apple season is officially underway. Meanwhile, Murcia melons are at their peak, and dairy commodity markets remain quiet.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

The UK is finally stepping back from its record-breaking hot spell.

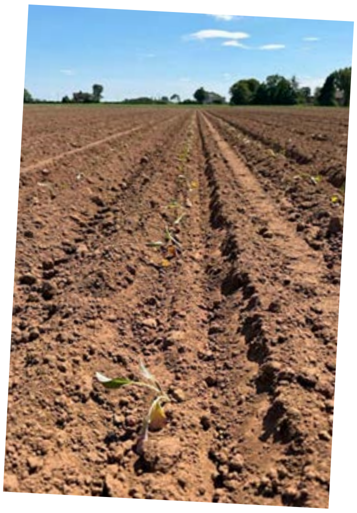
Daytime highs are settling into the 22–26°C range, with overnight temperatures around 13–16°C — far more manageable than the nine days this summer reaching 34°C or above. Sunny spells continue with isolated cloud. Holland is cooler still at 18–23°C by day and 13–15°C overnight.

Southern Spain remains warm at 28–32°C by day with nights holding at 24–26°C, though inland provinces still hit 36–38°C. Morocco sits at a pleasant 24–26°C by day and 18–19°C overnight, with consistent sunshine across growing regions.

The moderating UK conditions are welcome, but growers face the aftermath rather than a clean reset. Dry soils, depleted farm reservoirs, and heat-checked plants will shape supply for weeks. The Environment Agency confirmed a rapid drop in irrigation storage this spring — some areas hit 50–60% capacity in June — and ongoing dry weather will put further pressure on abstraction licences.

BRASSICAS UNDER PRESSURE, AND A WINTER GAP FORMING

The prolonged UK heatwave has taken a particular toll on brassica crops.



Cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage and Tenderstem broccoli would ordinarily be advancing rapidly through the fields at this point in the season. The sustained heat caused many crops to slow dramatically or enter something close to dormancy as plants struggled with the conditions.

Beyond the immediate supply disruption, there is a more serious longer-term concern to flag. Winter cauliflower crops planted earlier in the summer have failed in some growing areas — the combination of heat stress and restricted water availability has been fatal at a critical establishment stage. While UK and imported Dutch and Polish supply is covering current demand, the loss of those winter plantings means there is a very real risk of a supply gap emerging later in the year, likely through the autumn and into winter. It is worth factoring this into forward planning now, while alternatives are easier to arrange.

The difficulties are not confined to brassicas. Potato and onion crops are also growing more slowly than usual during periods of high temperatures, and the soft fruit season has been running in less consistent flushes — moving quickly between moments of heavy supply and tight availability as heat-ripened crops come in unevenly.

There is a broader cost dimension to keep in mind too. FEPEX data shows Spanish fresh produce export volumes to the UK fell 5% in the first four months of 2026, while the value per tonne increased by around 8%. The UK remains significantly reliant on Spain as its largest overseas supplier of both fresh vegetables and fresh fruit. Where UK home-grown supply is disrupted, the competition for Spanish volume — and the pricing that goes with it — is likely to be keener.

***Practical note:** customers should expect some natural variation in size, shape and appearance from UK-grown produce this month. Growers are working hard to maintain supply in difficult conditions and a degree of flexibility on specification is genuinely helpful during periods of heat stress.*

Vegetables

Aubergines

Supply from Holland and Belgium continues at a steady pace, with volumes not excessive but reliable enough to keep the market broadly balanced.

Pricing has held firm as a result. Quality across both origins is particularly good, with well-set fruit and consistent calibre.

Broccoli

UK production accelerated sharply through the heat and is now in rapid retreat.

The warm conditions pulled the crop forward much faster than usual, and supply is contracting quickly. Pricing has pushed firmly above double figures and is unlikely to ease meaningfully in the near term. Dutch and Spanish imported availability is helping to bridge the gap.

Cauliflower

UK availability is limited and some imported Dutch and Polish fruit has come into the trade to supplement.

Pricing has firmed and is expected to remain elevated. As noted in the headline section, there is a more serious longer-term supply concern given the loss of winter plantings — a watch-and-wait situation.

Celery

UK home production continues to perform well under the current warm conditions and the crop is looking very good.

Quality is particularly strong. Pricing is expected to continue at its current level with no significant changes anticipated.

Courgettes

UK, Holland and Belgium all have active crops following the recent hot weather, and the combination of sources is producing good overall volumes.

Quality across all origins remains solid.

Cucumbers

Volume is gradually picking up from both UK local production and Holland as fresh-planted crops come through.

The newer plantings are producing good-quality fruit. Pricing remains on the higher side but should ease back as newer crops build volume. Expect a gradual improvement in quality consistency as the transition to younger crops completes.

Leeks

Availability is improving steadily, with supply building from Holland, Belgium and UK local production which is now starting to come properly on stream.

The Spanish imported season is approaching its end. Pricing is expected to soften gradually as UK volumes continue to build.

Vegetables

Cabbage – Green, White, Savoy

British green and white cabbage are producing excellent quality and availability is improving week on week.

Savoy is building more slowly and remains the tighter end of the family. Imported Spanish and Portuguese volumes continue to increase, though neither is plentiful. Pricing is broadly stable.

Sweet Pointed / Ramiro Peppers

Production from Holland and Belgium has been stepping up and yields are now at higher levels.

UK local production is also contributing decent volumes. Quality is good across all origins. Pricing is set to ease slightly as availability continues to improve.

Padron / Habanero / Jalapeño / Chilli Peppers

Spain and Morocco continue with consistent supply, though many crops are finishing and new plantings will get properly under way from the final weeks of August into early September.

Red chillies remain more expensive than green. Padron is firming in price. Holland is maintaining good volumes across most of these lines. Overall quality is solid.

Sweet Bite Peppers

Holland is running excellent volumes alongside continuing UK local production.

Demand is healthy and quality is outstanding. Pricing is expected to stay at current levels given the strong demand-supply balance.

Salads

Tomatoes

Standard Loose Round - After a prolonged period of generous supply, the market has now corrected as expected. Yields have started dropping and pricing has responded quickly, climbing sharply. This trajectory is unlikely to reverse in the near term, and some early picking by growers keen to capture demand could result in slightly backward consignments.

Intense Plum - Availability is lower than in recent weeks and pricing has escalated above double figures. Quality is excellent throughout. As the season moves past its midpoint, the proportion of medium-sized fruit in the 47–57mm band is increasing.

Beef Tomatoes - Supply from Holland and Belgium has been performing well, though volumes are beginning to ease back. Pricing was competitive but is now on an upward trajectory. Quality across both origins is excellent.

Plum Tomatoes - Belgium and Holland continue to deliver consistent volumes, keeping pricing stable. This applies equally to plum on the vine and loose. Quality is outstanding and pricing is expected to remain broadly unchanged.

Vine Tomatoes - Availability from Holland and Belgium remains good while most crops are in full production. Pricing is still competitive and quality exceptional. Volumes may begin easing during the coming week — expect pricing to edge up steadily if supply does begin to tighten.

Cherry on the Vine & Cocktail - Cherry on the vine from

Salads

Holland and Belgium are well stocked across all varieties, with pricing steady. Cocktail is less plentiful but sufficient to meet demand. Quality is good throughout, with flavour and brix levels particularly impressive on the premium varieties.

Heritage / Inca - Dutch, Belgian and UK - Holland and Belgium remain stable on availability, while UK volumes have eased back. The presentation and quality across the different varieties in the mix is good. Pricing has been high as a result of the heat ripening the fruit too quickly.

Cherry & Baby Plum - Spanish and Moroccan cherry production continues at a low ebb, but Holland is carrying good availability to compensate. Baby plum is a touch more plentiful from Spain and Morocco and Dutch volumes are also solid. Quality is good across all origins.

Peppers – Standard Bell

Availability across red, yellow and green from Holland, Belgium and UK is very strong right now

Red and yellow are the most competitively priced, while green remains somewhat firmer. Quality is good across the board, though there is an element of mixed colouration on some red consignments — particularly where fruit has been exposed to rapid temperature changes — which can be up to 20% on some batches. Pricing is expected to hold at broadly similar levels into the coming week.

Iceberg, Little Gem and Cos Lettuce

Availability across all three lines has improved modestly from UK and Holland, but strong demand has kept pricing well supported and this is expected to continue.

Quality is particularly impressive — excellent internal condition and good shelf life.

Fruit

Strawberries

The British strawberry season continues into August and the eating quality this year has been outstanding.

The cool, slow spring — with its pattern of cold nights and gradually warming days — built exceptional sugar levels and flavour in the fruit that growers have described as one of the best quality years in recent memory.
The heatwave has introduced some unpredictability in production flushes, with crops moving quickly between periods of heavy availability and tighter supply as fruit ripens rapidly and unevenly in the heat. Some variation in week-to-week supply is to be expected as August progresses. Pricing has been holding well on the back of strong consumer demand through the school summer holidays. As the month wears on, volumes will begin to ease and the season will start its natural wind-down.

Raspberries

UK raspberry supply is in good flow through August and quality is standing out as a particular highlight this season.

Like strawberries, raspberries have benefited enormously from the cool spring, which delivered excellent fruit set and strong sugar development. Supply has been reasonably consistent, though the heatwave has introduced some variation in production volumes week to week. Quality is impressive across all sources with well-coloured, flavoursome fruit.

Fruit

Blueberries

British blueberries are having a breakout summer.

The quality this season is exceptional — the combination of a cool spring with warm days and cold nights has delivered excellent sugar levels and larger-than-usual berry sizing. The British season runs well into autumn under protection, so there is plenty of the UK crop still to come. Portuguese and Eastern European supply is running alongside to give good overall category depth.

Blackberries

British blackberry production is building steadily through August with the eating varieties leading the way in both volume and quality.

The warm conditions have accelerated ripening, meaning growers need to move quickly through picking cycles to maintain fruit condition. Belgian and Dutch open-punnet fruit is also contributing and provides a useful contingency. Flavour is excellent on ripe fruit — August-picked British blackberries are at their seasonal best and worth promoting.

Cherries

The British cherry season is entering its closing chapter.

Scottish production is contributing alongside the winding-down of Kent and West Midlands volumes. Eating quality remains very good — the warm summer has produced well-coloured, sweet fruit — but volumes are declining and pricing is firming as supply naturally tightens. By the end of August the UK season will have largely concluded.

Tree Fruit – the new season arrives

UK & French New-Season Apples

One of the most exciting moments of the produce year is under way.

The first new-season British apples are beginning to arrive, led by Discovery — arguably the UK's most eagerly anticipated early variety. Discovery has an unmistakable flavour profile: bright acidity, soft strawberry notes and a sweetness that its Cox-to-come successors will take weeks to match. These early UK varieties are available for a relatively brief window — typically four to six weeks — before the main maincrop harvest builds through September.

French new-season Gala is also arriving and provides a more consistent, commercially resilient option for volume lines during the transition. The French Gala crop has had a good growing season and quality is coming in well. Both UK and French supplies will build steadily through August and September, gradually displacing the Southern Hemisphere fruit that has carried the category through the spring and summer.

The changeover from imported Southern Hemisphere to home-grown is a genuine provenance shift and a story that resonates strongly with consumers who buy into seasonal British produce. Discovery and Worcester in August, Cox and Bramley in September and October: this is the calendar that defines the British apple year.

Southern Hemisphere Apples – final weeks

Chilean, New Zealand and South African apple stocks are in their closing weeks.

Quality on arriving fruit remains good but selection is narrowing as the campaigns wind down. Where specific varieties or calibres are needed, it is worth moving across to the new European crop without delay.

Fruit

Pears

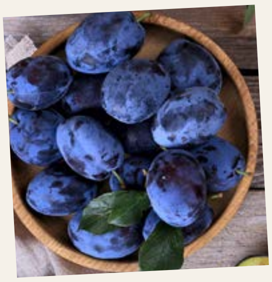
UK and European conference pears are not far off — the first new-season fruit is expected to begin arriving in September as the domestic crop comes in.

For now, Argentinian and South African pears are still providing the supply, with good eating quality and no significant availability concerns. The approaching changeover means this is a good moment to plan category transitions with customers, particularly for foodservice menus that feature pears prominently.

UK Plums

British plums are very much in season and August is their prime month.

Home-grown Victoria plums, the quintessential British variety, are at their best — sweet, juicy and deeply flavoured when picked at full ripeness. Other British varieties including Opal and Marjorie's Seedling are also contributing volume. The warm summer has produced good colouration and sugar levels. Spanish red plums are running alongside to give additional category depth, and yellow varieties are also available. This is the moment to feature plums prominently on summer menus.



Damsons

Early UK damsons are beginning to appear and will build in volume through the latter part of August into September.

Sizing this year may be a touch smaller in areas that did not receive enough late-summer rainfall, but flavour is very good. Damsons are an undersung category — intensely flavoured, brilliantly versatile for both sweet and savoury applications, and a true signal of late-summer British produce.

Avocados

Peruvian supply continues in good shape and remains the dominant origin.

The bias is towards larger sizing, with smaller calibres being the pricier end of the range. Dry matter is good and ripening behaviour is well-managed. No significant supply concerns.

Oranges & Easy Peelers

Southern Hemisphere supply continues to carry the market.

South African navels remain the main workhorse for oranges, with Argentinian and Egyptian fruit providing additional cover. Easy peelers are predominantly Peruvian and South African. Pricing has remained firmer than usual through the summer following the Eastern Cape flood disruption earlier in the season. Quality of arriving fruit is good across origins.

Lemons

We remain on Southern Hemisphere supply with South African and Argentinian fruit doing the heavy lifting.

The residual disruption from the Eastern Cape flooding continues to feed through, with SA volumes tighter than planned. Argentinian fruit remains the most consistent performer on quality and volume. Pricing stays firmer than typical for this point in the summer.

Fruit

Mango

Keitt variety from Brazil and Egypt is now well established in the programme, having taken over from the Dominican Republic Kent season.

Quality and sizing are good. Flavour is at a high point.

Grapes

Early-season Spanish, Italian and Egyptian fruit is now arriving in proper volumes following the transitional period at the start of the summer.

Quality on the new European crop is improving week on week as the season builds. Both seedless green and red varieties are available. Pricing is settling as European volumes ramp up.

Melons

Watermelon - Spain continues to deliver impressive availability, with the main production now coming out of Murcia and inland growing regions. Stripy seedless remains a little more plentiful than black seedless, which continues to command a premium. Despite strong demand, pricing across most sizes is very competitive. Sugar brix levels and overall quality are excellent — this is the watermelon season at its peak.

Honeydew - The main growing regions of Murcia and Alicante are producing improving volumes, though strong demand has kept pricing well supported. The longer, smaller-count fruit is slightly more accessible on price. Quality is particularly good.

Galia - Supply remains limited on the more popular 5s and 6s, which are holding firm on price. There is a little more availability on longer, smaller sizes at more competitive levels. Overall the category remains tight.

Cantaloupe - Availability is still restricted and demand continues to outpace supply, keeping pricing at elevated levels. Eating quality and sugar brix are excellent — arguably the best of the summer season. A premium but worthwhile category to feature.

Dairy News

The latest AHDB data covering the period through to the end of June paints a subdued picture for the dairy commodity market, and the trajectory has shown little sign of changing as we move into August.

Butter has continued its downward drift and has now reached its lowest level since July 2021, extending a decline that has given back all the ground recovered earlier in 2026. Markets have been described as extremely quiet, with high stocks in store and very limited buyer appetite heading into the summer holiday period.

Mild Cheddar has also slipped a further notch, though the move is less dramatic than in the fats. Stocks are reportedly substantial and demand is soft, keeping values at depressed levels.

Bulk cream has bucked the trend slightly, seeing a positive shift through June as UK milk volumes eased from their earlier highs and processing capacity looked a little less pressured. That said, there remains a significant premium versus EU cream returns, and demand is reported to be weakening at the margin.

The overall picture for August is one of continued softness in butter and Cheddar pricing if conditions persist. Bulk cream has been the one brighter spot. The watch points remain: a renewed Middle East escalation or any sustained dry weather damping summer milk yields would be the most likely triggers for a change in market direction.

Buyers Choice - UK Blueberries

August is peak season for British blueberries, and 2026 is shaping up to be a landmark year for the category.

Sales of UK-grown fruit have surged 73% year-on-year, driving a 27% increase across the category, according to British Berry Growers.

Driven by heavy investment in polytunnels, AI optical grading, and drones, UK production has expanded by 40% over the last five years, creating one of Britain's most technically sophisticated horticultural sectors.

Once an outsider pursuit hampered by specific soil demands, commercial blueberry growing has transformed. Substrate growing, LED lighting, polytunnel protection, and precision fertigation have made blueberries a highly controlled crop. Leading growers now use AI-driven optical grading to photograph each berry multiple times in fractions of a second, evaluating size, shape, and quality before packing.

This technology extends the growing season from May through October at unprecedented volumes. Exceptional quality this season—driven by cool spring temperatures—has delivered extraordinary sugar levels and berry size.

Did you know?

- Anthocyanin pigment makes blueberries a benchmark natural blue food source.
- Cultivated blueberry bushes can fruit commercially for over fifty years.
- Natural waxy bloom protects against moisture loss and fungal decay.
- Wild blueberries pack twice as many antioxidants as cultivated types.
- Indigenous peoples mixed blueberries with meat to make long-lasting pemmican.
- Mature bushes yield up to seven thousand berries every year.
- Polytunnels supply extra heat needed to boost UK fruit production.

Culinary uses

Baked classic: Direct into muffins, pancakes, or warm crumble with cinnamon.

Savoury compote: Simmered with lemon and star anise for duck, venison, or lamb.

Summer salad: Folded with halloumi, toasted almonds, watercress, and honey-mustard dressing.

Dessert sauce: Blended smooth for cheesecakes or panna cotta.

Frozen shortcut: Used straight from the freezer for smoothies and overnight oats.

Cocktails & mocktails: Muddled into gin drinks for a deep purple-blue hue.

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