

# February

# Market News

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## Overview

Wholesale markets have been slow through January as we all count the cost of Christmas. The continued mild weather through January is welcomed from a growing point however we are due for a cold snap in the coming weeks from the East. Frosts have also been seen in the South of France and Eastern Spain which is slowing production of salad products with snow forecast for the first week in February.

## Seasonal changes

February is the last month of Spanish Cauliflower before moving back to UK (Lincolnshire) in mid March. UK will have a much heavier Leaf (frame) which cover most of the Curd to protect against any frost.

## Current Challenges

- Supply of small Granny Smith remains tight and Golden Delicious make a good alternative
- Production in Spain is falling due to cool weather which will not effect us but is already pushing up the wholesale prices.

## In Season UK

- UK forced rhubarb has now started albeit a bit late due to the mild winter
- Purple sprouting broccoli is very good
- Brussel sprouts are still really good albeit cutting was stopped this week due to frost!
- English apple from cold store continues well



## Vegetables

**Potatoes** – Growers are reluctant to release their better quality stocks at raw material prices currently been offered. Quality of baking potatoes is good and eat superbly, however some black dot and silver scurf is creeping in to spoil skin finish. Supply will be packed out of cold stores from Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Lancaster and Scotland. Maris Piper from Shropshire is very good and dry matters are now reaching 19/22% with excellent fry quality. Availability of both Mid and Salad potatoes are now in short supply from both UK and France. Average sizes are already leaning to the top of the size specification due to the lack of smaller sizes. Currently, Mids are from Herefordshire, Shropshire and Cambridgeshire and quality is good.

**Carrot** – Supply is now strawed carrot, quality and supply is good.

**Parsnip and Swede** – Quality of parsnip is good, with no supply issues. Quality of swede is also good, with no problems expected.

**Cauliflower** – Spanish crops are slowing but quality is excellent. We are now in the last month of Spanish and getting ready for over wintered UK which will have a much heavier frame compared to Spanish to protect from UK ground frosts.

**Cabbage** – Both Savoy and Green cabbage are enjoying this mild weather, quality is excellent with good head weights. A small amount of white fly has been seen in some crops of Savoy and is being closely monitored. All White and Red cabbage supplied is barn stored crop, no issues with quality or supply. Spring Greens continue to come from Lincolnshire, no quality or availability issues. Kale going well, the variety being harvested in February is much darker in colour than we have previously seen, a small amount of white fly has been seen in some crops.

**Broccoli** – Spanish production has dropped due to colder weather but no quality issues to report.

**Onion** – Large Spanish onion is going well, quality and availability is good. UK & Dutch yellow and red onion is going well with no quality or availability issues to report.

## Salads

**Aubergine** – Spanish quality is good but cooler weather in Spain over the last month is slowing production.

**Capsicums** – Spanish quality has been very good this year, sizes are tending to be towards the top end of the 70mm–90mm specification due to low levels of sunshine, crops are increasing in size rather than colouring up. Some flashing (mixed colour) is visible in yellow which is acceptable in class 1.

**Tomatoes** – Spanish (Canarian) fruit is going very well with good colour and quality. The Canaries range between 15°C – 20°C which is typically 5°C warmer than mainland Spain.

**Courgette** – Spanish quality is good but production has really dropped due to cold conditions.

**Cucumbers** – Spanish (Canarian) quality is very good, Mainland Spain is seeing a slow in production due to cooler weather

**Celery** – Spanish supply and quality good



## Leaf

**Iceberg, Cos and Gems** –Production is falling due to cooler weather in Spain however quality remains good

**Fancy Leaf** –Spanish continues to go well, cooler weather may result in head sizes being a little smaller although still within specification

## Fruit

### Apples

**UK**– Cox apples continues to go well, mainly Cox but Braeburn and Gala are also at their best. Now being packed from cold stored crop, quality is better than expected for this time of year

### France

**Golden Delicious**– French fruit is delivering excellent quality.

**Red Apple** –Braeburn quality is excellent.

**Granny Smith** – French quality is good but supply of small fruit is very difficult as it was a good season for large fruit, there is plenty of small Golden Delicious to take us through

### Stone Fruit

**Peach & Nectarine** –Southern hemisphere is available but taste is poor

**Apricot** – Southern hemisphere available but expensive and has poor taste

**Plum**– South African Purple Majestic is very good.

### Melon

**Honeydew, Galia, Cantaloupe & Water** – Brazilian fruit is going well and eating great, this will take us through the next couple of months when we move up to Central America.

### Citrus

**Orange** –Small fruit is now Egyptian Baladi, which eat superb. For Medium and Large fruit, Egyptian & Turkish Navels are superb.

**Lemon** – Spanish Prima Flore has good juice content and look very bright.

**Easy Peelers** –Moroccan Clementine's eat fantastically albeit shelf life is reduced but should improve shortly as variety changes. Colour is good.

### Banana

Production has now dropped which is usual for this time of year, Ecuador have been experiencing severe floods, the Caribbean Basin has suffered cold weather particularly Dominican Republic with Colombia and Costa Rica under producing which is causing a shortage of fruit in Europe. Prices have already jumped to reflect this.



## Berries

**Strawberry** – Egyptian fruit volumes are decreasing and supply will have ended by mid February. To cover the decreasing Egyptian volumes, Moroccan volumes will increase, variety is Festival. By the middle of the month we will start to see Spanish fruit, varieties Candonga and Fotuna, some white shoulder maybe present at the start of the Spanish season. Towards the end of the month, small volumes of Portuguese fruit will start coming though.

**Raspberries** – As temperatures and general weather conditions improve in Spain more product will be sourced from there in February. Spanish quality is much stronger than the Mexican fruit we saw in January, Spanish varieties will be Glen Lyon, Sugana and Brilliance.

**Blackberries** – Supply will be coming from Guatemala and Mexico, quality is very good, variety is Tupi.

**Blueberries** – Supply and quality is excellent, fruit will Chilean which we will be staying on for the next few months.

**Red Currants** – Fruit will be Dutch CA stored until the middle of the month where it will switch over to Chilean sea freight. This product has been stored but is much fresher than the Dutch, therefore you will still see yellow and brown strings.

## Grapes

**Green** – Supply will be split between Chilean and South African Fruit, varieties will switch between Sugarone and Thompson. No quality or supply issues are foreseen.

**Red** – Supply will be a mixture of South African and Chilean Fruit, varieties will be a mixture of Flame, Starlight and Desert, there are no quality or supply issues foreseen.

## Exotics

**Sugar Snaps & Mange Tout** – Mainly Egyptian and quality is very good.

**Beans** – Kenyan is good with no supply problems albeit very hot out there

**Avocado** – A mix of Spanish and Israeli. Quality good.

**Asparagus** – Still short as it is cold in Peru, so Mexican will probably start mid Feb to make up the shortfall

**Baby Corn** – Availability back on track following flooding in Thailand. Quality is good

**Asparagus Tips** – Availability from Thailand also good, now back up to full production,

**Butternut** – Now Portuguese until the move to South African mid/late February, quality good.

**Baby Vegetables** – South African production is good with no quality issues, baby fennel is in demand due to shortages out of France. French supplies of **Baby Turnip** is improved and **Beetroot** is good.

**Chillies** – Dutch now finished, Egyptian quality is very good.

**Sweet Potatoes** – USA from North Carolina is very good and expected to remain so,

**Figs** – Brazilian quality remains very good

**Mango** – Brazilian Tommy Atkins & Keitt are very good.

**Limes** – Brazilian is very good, Mexican are now finished for the next few months. No supply problems to date albeit expected to tighten up over coming month

**Garlic & Ginger** – Good quality Chinese.

**Shallots** – Good quality French.

