



MARKET NEWS

May 2010

Overview

Last month

Who would have thought it, a volcano over thousands of miles away, could have had such a major impact on us here in the UK. Whilst the impact on travellers was widely reported it was overlooked by the media that as a nation, we import a phenomenal amount of fresh produce, much of this coming into the country by air. It would be fair to say that importers have never seen anything like this, they found themselves with no product to sell what so ever! Time will tell if there are any casualties from this. It took some time to get things back up to speed due to fresh payloads being off loaded when passenger planes reach their maximum weight as they were full of repatriated passengers and the backlog of luggage.

Looking Forward

The big move from the Mediterranean back to UK and Holland is now fully underway, it's fantastic to see different seasonal lines appearing on a daily basis.

In season and home grown:

UK Asparagus, Purple Sprouting Broccoli, Jersey Royals, Spring Greens, New season Leaf coming through (Gems, Fancy Leaf). Spring Onions, Over wintered Cauliflower, UK Iceberg and Cos are a couple of weeks away.

Peach & Nectarine have started to be available from Spain.

Season Change – be aware

Savoy Cabbage UK (yellow hearts, no outer leaf) and Spanish /Portuguese (light weight no heart), Canarian Round Tomato (full of flavour but looking a bit tired), Dutch tomato (looks great but lacks taste). Iceberg – last few weeks of Spanish.





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Vegetables

Potatoes. There are no major issues to report. There are still a few isolated problems with bruising on the Maris Piper due to poor lifting conditions and high dry matter. There are ample supplies of good quality baking potato, mainly Estima/Harmony and Melody varieties. UK Mids are becoming more difficult to source, due to the 2009/2010 crop having a very high percentage of large potatoes. We may see more red eye varieties such as Cara & King Edward. Raw material prices are strengthening on the imported salads, this is due to growers getting better returns selling to Eastern Europe, due to the poor rate of exchange on the sterling. Planting of the 2010/2011 crops are well under way, growth of the new crop is being slowed down due to the cold night temperatures. Planting is slightly behind last year, however if we continue to get warmer days then planting should soon be on par to last year. Have we mentioned Jerseys ?? Fantastic.

Carrot & Parsnip. Carrot harvesting is moving to Scotland from the 2nd week of May, where quality and availability is excellent. Parsnips supply and quality remains solid, will be moving to imported stock during June.

Cauliflower. No supply issues expected during early May. The quality is currently excellent and is expected to continue. We will be moving varieties into TTG's toward to the end of May, these have a slightly lighter curd and are creamier. Depending on demand and growth of the poly crops, German product may have to be used.

Broccoli Quality is good but volumes are still low. Growing conditions in Spain have improved but volumes are expected to remain low. UK planting is underway but around 3 weeks late, which may be felt in June. Don't forget Purple Sprouting, it's British and fantastic.

Cabbage. No issues currently seen or expected on the green cabbage, new season crop due at the end of May. UK crops of Savoy cabbage are more or less finished. Spanish crop is available in small volumes but is light and fluffy. We will now advise Spring Greens as an alternative, as pointed cabbage isn't quite there yet. White and red cabbage is cold stored crop, the supply and quality is excellent with no foreseen issues. There could be availability issues in early June due to planting running 2 weeks late. UK Purple sprouting wow!

Onion

Prices of UK/Dutch cooking onion have continued to rise, they are now at 3 to 4 times the usual cost as stocks dwindle. Chilean is VERY GOOD but very expensive.

Salads

Aubergine The quality from Spain is good, helped with Dutch & UK glass house becoming available.

Capsicums Spring crop from Almeria (Spain) has started but the volumes are low, Israeli Red and Yellow bridged the gap but we are now fully Dutch which is excellent quality.





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Tomatoes. Tomato from the Canaries has improved but is nearing the end. As Dutch now coming through the pressure on supply has eased. Dutch looks good but doesn't yet deliver on taste.

Courgette The quality is good but volumes are still low and are expected to remain so, UK is still a month away.

Cucumbers Spring crop out of Spain is available, UK and Dutch are underway with quality excellent. Now fully Dutch and should be moving onto unwrapped product next week.

Leaf

Iceberg, Cos and Gems Quality has improved due to more favorable growing conditions in Spain, we are now on the home straight with UK production just coming through.

Fancy Leaf A very similar story to the above, production has improved, quality is acceptable. Covered UK production is now here with outdoor a couple of weeks away.

Celery The quality is good, with Spring crop now coming through.

Fruit

Apples

Golden Delicious French supply is very tight and Southern Hemisphere hasn't arrived, it's expected over the coming month.

Red Still good quality, French is available but in reduced quantities, some Southern hemisphere Gala is available but it is very expensive.

Granny Smith French supply is very tight and Southern Hemisphere hasn't arrived, it's expected over the coming month/weeks.

Stone Fruit

Peach & Nectarine Spanish is now coming through and the quality is improving.

Plum South American (Chilean) fruit is now with us and of good quality.

Melon

Honeydew Costa Rican & Honduran fruit continues, the quality is good. Loading will stop in around 2-3 weeks, which gives us some time to let the Spanish season bed in.

Galia & Cantaloupe Similar to Honeydew, currently in short supply, however the quality is good.

Watermelons The quality is good, Costa Rica has stopped shipping, so prices will rise as we approach the Spanish Almeria seasons.

Fruit

Citrus

Orange Small has moved to Egyptian supply, as there is more plentiful supply. Medium/Large sizes from Spain are still delivering good quality going forward.

Lemon Quality remains good out of Spain, the variety is due to change from Primera Flor (First flower) to Verna over the coming weeks. We do not expect any issues going forward.

Easy Peelers South American Fruit is much improved in flavour and colour.





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Banana Quality overall is good, Dominican Republic is now coming into its peak growing season (April – July), we will be expecting good quality fruit and will be looking at the Dominican Republic as our main source/supplier over the next few months. Ecuador have experienced heavy rains which is causing some quality issues with reduced volumes.

Soft Fruit

Berries

Strawberry The majority of fruit will be from Belgium/Holland where the quality is superb. Due to the recent spring storms in the Mediterranean, fruit from Portugal and France will be limited. **Raspberries** Still using Spanish fruit, production and quality continues to improve. There may well be a small volume of Mexican fruit available towards the end of May. **Blackberries** Following disruption to supply caused by the Icelandic volcano, volumes are returning to normal on fruit arriving from Mexico/Guatemala. Spain will start production half way through May, quality is expected to be excellent. **Blueberry** Now using Spanish and Moroccan fruit, where the fruit is of excellent sizing, quality and eat quality. The Chilean season is now over. **Redcurrant** Moving away from Dutch into Chilean fruit where the quality is improving. Small volumes of Spanish will be available from the end of May.

Grapes

White Not a good start to May, due to low volume availability on Indian due to around 80% of the Indian crop been rejected from UK. This was due to some Indian growers exceeding the legal level on a pesticide called Chlormequat. Until we move onto Mexican in the middle of May and Egyptian at the end of May we will be using end of season Chilean and approved Indian.

Red Once again the Chilean Crimson and Flame has excellent eat quality with good availability.

Exotics

Sugar Snaps & Mange Tout Supply is still incredibly short, Guatemalan has helped bridge the gap but the arrival of new season Kenyan hasn't come a moment too soon albeit limited volumes. Kenya is starting to look more positive as the April El Nino rains have helped produce an ample supply of **Beans**. Good quality **Avocado's** are mainly Peruvian Fueta with some RSA. Growing conditions in Thailand are good but the civil unrest need to be watched closely from a supply point. **Baby Corn** is good, with no issues. **Asparagus Tips** supply is quite short (Use UK) **Lemon Grass** is fine. **Butternut Squash** South America and excellent availability/quality moving to Panamanian. RSA **Baby Vegetables** Things have improved although volumes are still low, Baby Leeks are most effected. **Chillies** are Kenyan with no quality problems to report although supply is quite tight. **Sweet Potatoes** Honduran & USA, the quality is good. **Figs, Limes** and **Mango** supply from Brazil is ample and the quality is good. **Garlic** is still very short and expected to remain so. **Ginger** is easier as new season is now coming through, it looks slightly glassy in appearance, the quality good.

Shallots Cold store coming to an end with some deterioration in quality, new season is still around 4 weeks (keep stocks tight).

