



freshconnect.

Market

REPORT

March 2024

FRUIT

We are pleased to see the back of the bleak winter months and heading into Spring we are optimistic the weather will brighten up shortly. March is often the time for menu changes and with Mother's Day around the corner we hope to see some lovely seasonal options to choose from.

We are hearing rumours that English **Strawberries** are just around the corner and we cannot wait, despite this it is still very early as the season does not usually begin until April. Moroccan berries (**Strawberries, Raspberries & Blueberries**) are delicious at the moment and really good size.

Blackberries are coming from Mexico so are not quite on par with the other berries due to further travel time. **Nadorcotts** are thriving at the moment, bursting with flavour.

Egyptian **Oranges** (all sizes) are still in great supply. We have seen a short burst of **Lychees** available on the market, which are really good value for money, make

the most before the season switches. English **Royal Gala** is still coming in strong, volumes are slightly depleted but nothing to be too concerned about. **Plums** and

Grapes are in much better supply compared to last month. **English Rhubarb** is a highlight again this month with the season in full swing and plenty of **Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb** to go around.



Blood Oranges will slowly draw to an end towards the end of the month, keep an eye out for slightly paler colour flesh as a result of the season finishing. **Melons** (in particular **Watermelon & Galia**) seems to be a short term problem product due to further boat delays. We are hopeful availability will improve over the next few weeks. We have noticed volumes on **Pineapples** are tricky due to heavy rainfall in Costa Rica.

VEGETABLES

Let's start with the news we've all been waiting for that **Jersey Royal Mids & Wares** are due to hit the market any day now. However, they will inevitably start off limited availability and higher price. We are expecting unprecedented challenges with **Potatoes**, this is due to a number of factors: plantings are down by a further 15% from last year; heavy rain has made the situation worse with farmers unable to lift crops resulting in rotting, causing waste.



Due to these reasons we don't see the situation improving anytime soon.

At the moment availability of **Savoy Cabbage** is a bit hit and miss where the rain has been so heavy for so long it has caused delays with picking from the fields. Portuguese season has begun but prices are steep due to coming from further afield. This may also have an impact on **Black Cabbages** and all varieties of **Kale (red, variegated & green)**.

On a brighter note, the availability of **Red & White Cabbages, Broccoli & Cauliflower** are much better. **Sweet Potatoes** are a potential problem as we are waiting for Spanish season to start so the only produce on hand at the moment is coming from America. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of South African **Butternut Squash** as Portuguese and Spanish are drawing to a close. Great news!! ... We have officially seen the first batch of tunnel grown **English Asparagus** from Wye Valley. Price is high as expected but should begin to drop as the season progresses. Our field grown **Asparagus** will begin from the farm in April, which is something to look forward to. In the meantime, **Foreign Asparagus** is great value and top quality at the moment.

SALADS

The first arrival of Dutch **Peppers & Aubergines** have hit the market. This means we are coming into Spring season. **Cucumbers & Tomatoes** will follow suit towards the end of the month, saying that availability at the moment is very steady and prices stable. Moroccan/Egyptian **Beef Tomato** season is coming to an end, we will transition to Dutch/Belgian which may see prices increase slightly.

Whole head **Lettuces (cos, iceberg & gem)** seem to be better availability than last month. This is the same for **Baby Leaf (mix leaf, spinach & rocket)**. We are still seeing some availability issues with **Avocados**, new season Peruvian will land in the coming weeks which will ease problems but Vessel delays are also adding pressures and pushbacks to importation.

MUSHROOMS & FORAGED

Wild Garlic has arrived!! Wet weather conditions has really made an impact and helped the season begin earlier than originally anticipated which is positive news. It's coming from the North Downs & Cornwall. Small volumes available of **Chanterelle, Girolle, Pied du Mouton, Trompette**, pre-order advised.

