



MARKET REPORT

Changing Seasons, Changing Markets.

SEPTEMBER UPDATE

Each month Dole provides an update on what is happening in the marketplace.

We explain which new lines we expect to see in the following month, the produce causing us concern and which lines are at their very best.

OVERVIEW

After a summer of unusually dry weather and higher temperatures across the UK and Europe, the market is beginning to show the effects. As we make the crossover into autumn, the big question is how the lack of rainfall will influence both the produce arriving in the weeks ahead and crops still to come.

Potatoes, roots and brassicas are already feeling the pressure, with growers reporting reduced yields, smaller sizing and, in some cases, crops that have simply struggled to reach their usual potential.

The picture is similarly challenging as we begin the transition towards winter salads, with the first signs of pressure already emerging.

There is certainly some uncertainty around pricing as we head towards the end of the year, with the impact of this summer's growing conditions potentially being felt well into next season.

This month's report will look at what is happening now, what we can expect through the autumn and, importantly, what the current conditions could mean further down the line.

VEGETABLES



The potato market is set to come under significant pressure over the coming weeks, with the effects potentially being felt well into next year.

Potatoes need plenty of moisture during development, with rainfall playing a major role in both sizing and overall yields.

Growers are already reporting lower volumes and smaller-than-usual crops, with pricing expected to significantly increase, particularly across bakers, maincrop varieties and prepared potato products. The picture is similar across cauliflower and broccoli, where reduced volumes are not meeting consistent demand.



As availability tightens, we expect pricing to come under increasing pressure as we move towards the end of the year.

Our procurement teams are keeping a close eye on crop reports and working with growers to maintain both continuity and value wherever possible.

Thankfully, not everything is looking quite so challenging. As menus gradually shift towards a more rustic autumnal feel, carrots and swede remain in good supply, with prices currently stable.

Looking further ahead, late-summer squash is well worth keeping on the radar. With their rich colours and natural sweetness, they are tailor-made for roasting, soups and comforting autumn dishes.



FRUIT



Stone fruit like flat peaches and plums are like the fashionable latecomer to the summer fruit party, but they are certainly making an entrance worth waiting for.

We are now in full flow with this superb fruit. Sweet, plump and packed with flavour, these little gems are equally at home in baking, in the morning yoghurt bowl or as a snack.

Sadly, cherries have now bowed out for another season, although strawberries, raspberries and blackberries remain in good supply as the soft fruit season enters its closing stages.



SALAD

Of all the categories, salads are currently proving to be among the most volatile. The combination of prolonged heat and a lack of rainfall is already being reflected in UK whole-head lettuce, with Iceberg in particular seeing a significant increase in price as available volumes reduce.

This pressure is also filtering through to lollo, oakleaf and endive, with demand remaining strong. One point worth highlighting for chefs is the impact this will have on our 500g mixed salad bags.



These have traditionally offered a reliable and cost-effective way to add variety to the plate, but with lollo, oakleaf and endive all key components, the wider market pressures will inevitably feed through to these products too.

Our aim, as always, is to manage this as closely as possible and minimise the impact wherever we can.

AT ITS BEST

Scottish Blueberries
UK Damsons
UK Plums
UK Apples
Turkish Figs



Our Dutch growing partners are also reporting potential reductions in quality and yields as their season draws towards a close, following the extreme temperatures and lack of water earlier in the summer.

Looking further ahead, early reports for winter salad crops are suggesting that pricing could remain firm. The early signs point towards a challenging winter season, with weather conditions likely to have a significant bearing on both availability and volumes.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely with our growers and supply partners as the season develops.

COMING SOON

Pumpkins
Mixed Squashes



Be sure to check out our website & sign up to your local depots mailing list