



MARKET REPORT

Spring Greens to Summer Dream

APRIL 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

Spring has now officially arrived, and the produce calendar is finally starting to look every bit as bright as the longer evenings promised.

A host of homegrown favourites are either already with us or firmly on the horizon, joined by a fresh wave of European arrivals and the full transition into the Dutch salad season.

We'll also see the welcome return of UK soft fruit. There's plenty to be excited about, from spring greens and elegant new-season arrivals to the ingredients that quietly signal summer is beginning to clear its throat.

That said, April isn't without its challenges. Ongoing issues around Spanish salad supply continue to create pressure, while instability in the Middle East and rising fuel costs are still having an impact on pricing across parts of the market.

So, let's take a closer look at the good, the bad and the downright delightful in the weeks ahead – and perhaps cast an eye towards early summer while we're at it.

VEGETABLES



The wait is over – Asparagus has arrived with a bang. This quintessential spring ingredient brings instant refinement to the plate, adding elegance, freshness and that unmistakable sense that the season has properly turned.

The wild garlic season is now well underway, with our forager reporting bumper yields thanks to last month's wet weather.

It's a product that captures spring in full voice, but with a famously short season, so chefs would be wise not to hang about.

Jersey Royals are also beginning to land. As ever, early prices may be enough to make even the hardiest kitchen GP wince, so it could be worth waiting a little longer for volumes to build and value to improve.

Closer to home, early summer cauliflower will soon be arriving, while those looking to freshen things up on the menu should keep an eye on two excellent Italian arrivals – broad beans for a lighter, greener feel and fennel for a clean, refreshing lift.

The supply of capsicums, aubergines, and broccoli have again been affected by the weather. As we move towards warmer weather, we hope supply will slowly return to normal.



Also worth a mention this month are UK cavolo nero, purple sprouting broccoli and hispi cabbage — all versatile spring favourites with plenty of menu potential.

FRUIT



The supply of Spanish soft fruit has remained patchy, but the good news is that reports suggest UK crop could begin arriving by mid to late April, with our Dutch friends' help to bridge the gap until then.

Raspberries have also felt the strain, with longer journeys from Spain and Morocco impacting consistency.

For chefs looking for the best imported options this month, blueberries and blackberries are currently offering the strongest balance of quality, availability and value.

Towards the end of the month, we should begin to see the first pockets of Spanish stone fruit arriving, with peaches leading the charge and nectarines close behind — always a welcome sign that summer is beginning to stir.

Elsewhere, Southern Hemisphere melons will gradually start to transition over to Spanish product. It's one of those rare moments when this retro classic deserves a proper turn in the spotlight, bringing freshness and a welcome hint of warmer days ahead.

Finally, Southern Hemisphere grapes will also begin their seasonal handover, with Greece, Turkey and Spain starting to take the reins as April progresses.

SALAD

To say salad including tomatoes supply have been challenging over the past few months would be putting it mildly. As we move further into the spring and towards summer, the market should begin to settle — although a few bumps in the road are likely to remain.

Reports suggest the Spanish wholehead lettuce season may finish a little earlier than usual, while the UK season is not expected to properly begin until early May.

That gap is likely to keep pricing on the firmer side in the short term. More positively, Dutch tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers are expected to start arriving from around mid-April, with encouraging reports coming through from growers in Holland as the transition gathers pace.



AT ITS BEST

- Wild garlic
- New Potatoes
- Homegrown Asparagus
- Cauliflower
- Italian Fennel
- UK Watercress

That said, wider pressures across the supply chain — particularly around fuel and transport costs — continue to influence pricing across parts of the market.

It remains a fluid picture, but our procurement teams are in daily contact with growers and supply partners, working hard to protect continuity, quality and the best possible value for customers.

For chefs looking to make the most of the month, UK watercress is a superb spring option, with its peppery bite adding freshness and lift to seasonal dishes. For those planning beyond April, UK heritage tomatoes should already be firmly on the radar.

COMING SOON

- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- UK Salads



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