



MARKET REPORT



Finishing on a tighter note

MARCH 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

Hurraaa! Spring is on the way, and what a long time coming it's been! With a host of spring-like products arriving that will help shape menus for the months ahead, March is a key month in the seasonal calendar.

Gradual rising temperatures will signal the joyous arrival of products with a lighter, less robust feeling. Expect to see a classic in the foraging world, spring offerings from Europe and a real possibility of UK soft fruit arriving!!

In a jam-packed report, we also have some early transitional news on the up-and-coming Dutch salad season, an update on the rising cost of spuds and some uplifting news about UK produce... Read on!

VEGETABLES



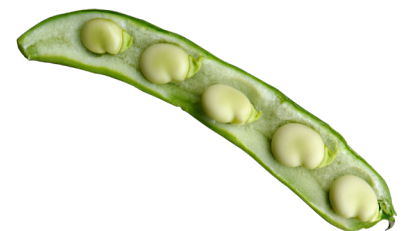
Spud prices will remain firm with pricing staying on the upward trend over the coming months. Generally speaking, potatoes are harvested towards the end of the year and then drawn from storage until early summer the following year. Crop yields are severely down this year, the extreme heavy rain last year being the main reason for this.

With stocks low and demand strong, the situation will continue until the season ends. Springtime officially kicks off this month with many products on the horizon that will help gradually revamp your menu.

Spring cauliflower will make a welcome appearance around mid-March. Spanish artichokes, at their best this month, have a unique character and flavour.

Towards the end of the month, Spanish peas and broad beans will begin to appear. UK leeks, which can be surprisingly versatile, are a splendid option. For menu planners looking further ahead, look out for wild garlic, Jersey Royals and homegrown asparagus.

All three seasonal gladiators may sneak in by the end of the month although it will be April before we see volumes increasing.



FRUIT

With blood oranges coming to an end, the much anticipated Valencia oranges season begins this month. Valencia oranges have a wonderful sweetness balanced with a subtle acidity, traditionally the season for this citrus favourite runs from March to September.

Egyptian oranges are currently in abundance with low prices but the quality is average compared to the Spanish counterpart.



Spanish strawberries will continue to arrive with the real possibility of UK fruit making a welcome appearance by late month.

Papaya, which can be utilised in many sweet or savoury dishes, can make a refreshing alternative this month. Use this underrated exotic fruit as a substitute for mango, a welcome addition to chutney recipes or simply add to a light tropical fruit salad.



SALAD



Early grower reports from Holland, on the impending salad season, have been encouraging with no concerns over supply. The transition over to Dutch produce will begin in late March although the season does not officially kick off until mid-April.



Grapes will continue to arrive from the Southern hemisphere along with plums. Stone fruit such as peaches or nectarines will be available although we are not expecting large volumes and prices to be strong.

The supply of melons from the southern hemisphere has tightened up forcing prices to rise. This is mainly due to heavy rain in the growing regions of Brazil, watermelon and honeydew are the main varieties affected.

AT THEIR BEST

- Spanish Peas
- Spanish Broad Beans
- Valencia Oranges
- Spanish Artichokes
- Cauliflower
- Purple Sprouting Broccoli

Spring onions are available all year round but at their best in March. This staple of the salad world can add a delicate onion flavour to a host of hot and cold dishes. Spanish cos lettuce is an ideal swap for iceberg for some frugal elegance.

Traditionally used in Caesar salad, the refreshing bitter leaves can be used in a wide variety of dishes including a replacement for a wrap in fajitas!!

PLANNING AHEAD?

- Wild Garlic
- Asparagus
- Jersey Royals
- Strawberries



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