

OLIVER KAY



CROP REPORT

Summer 2023

SUMMER LOVIN HAPPENED AT LAST (HOPEFULLY!)...

It's taken it's time but it is worth the wait! With a delayed spring kicking in thanks to a colder than usual April and early May, and planting a few weeks delayed, we are now looking ahead to the summer coming and with better news for crops – especially our lovely local UK produce.

With the much loved Jersey Royals in great shape (making up for the less good news on jacket spuds), and lovely UK asparagus still around, not forgetting beautiful British Heritage tomatoes – there is loads to be thankful for from our home soil!

Find out what to be choosing or losing from your menus over the next few months, as our buyer Lee gives you the lowdown on what's happening in the world of fresh produce.

Should you have any questions please contact our team who will be happy to help. Orders can be placed via your company ordering system or online via our website www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk, or 'Oliver Kay' app – 24 hours a day – 7 days a week, to suit your needs!

Read on for more information about key produce lines to assist with your menu planning.



Contact our team 01204 385463
or order online at www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk or via the Oliver Kay app

GROWING CONDITIONS

April was a predominantly unsettled month weather wise, with little in the way of consistent warmth, especially over England. Spring arrived a little later due to a cold April and start of May. The situation looks to be improving now though so fingers crossed for more 'normal' weather conditions (whatever 'normal' is in the UK!)

UK rainfall was very close to average overall, but with regional variations, most parts of Scotland being drier than average, but many growing areas in southern and eastern England being rather wet. For example, Kent saw 185% of its average rainfall while West Lothian saw just 59%. At least one weather station in Kent (East Malling) reported more than twice its normal level of rainfall.

A combination of unwanted rain in Lincolnshire and the cooler conditions, meant planting was 1-2 weeks behind, but is now going well. Recent sunshine has helped with crops growing under cover in the fields. However, we are still seeing ground frost warning in May, which is a concern.

CHALLENGES

Where do we start?!

Potatoes - UK & European potato stocks are rapidly diminishing. Lack of any large size in the remaining crop has resulted in 40s and 50s size jacket potatoes being in very short supply. Even the new season European crop do not have the larger sizes this early in the year. Our contingency, as in previous short years is that we supply 80's in place of 40s, and 100s in place of 50's i.e. 2 smaller sizes as opposed to 1 large size (a 2-portion option). This helps support UK farmers, utilises the whole crop avoiding food waste, and avoids expensive imports, whilst allowing us to maintain supply.

Onion - continues to be a challenge caused by the heat last year; UK & Europe shortfall in brown onion is being covered by supply from Egypt, China & Tasmania to maintain availability. We also contract Egyptian red onion each year for around the 6 weeks until new crop is ready.

Easy Peelers - will have some green colouring on the peel for a couple of weeks until South African supply is fully up-to-speed. They eat really well though so do not be put off by their appearance!

Kiwi - issues are looming on Kiwi supply. The Italian crop has not stored well so will finish much earlier than anticipated. We already knew there were reductions out of New Zealand, but unseasonal frosts have created additional issues resulting in the crop being down much more than originally anticipated. Chilean is being sourced, but pack size and price will vary. Unfortunately, this means there will be a gap in supply.

LOOKING FORWARD

Carrot - UK crop is coming to an end. We are receiving imports from Egypt & Israel as planned, to bridge the gap until UK starts again in July. This is the same for parsnip, imports through July until the new UK crop comes through in August.

UK new season broccoli, cauliflower and green cabbage are running slightly behind due to the colder weather.

Red cabbage - is imported, as planned and Spanish supply will bridge the gap until UK season begins in a couple of months. UK white cabbages will be from store until new crops starts in summer.



*We can supply all your fresh ingredients!
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LOCAL PRODUCE IN SEASON

UK asparagus is now underway, albeit a little late. We stop all imports during the UK season (so you can continue to order as usual). quality is very good. And all ready for the annual British Asparagus Festival 'Asparafest' in Evesham celebrating the delicious locally grown hero!

British Heritage or Heirloom tomato (depending on what you like to call them!) are fantastic and in time for British Tomato week 23rd May – 5th June.

Jersey Royals are in season and looking good.

Little Gem & Cos lettuce are coming through – and will all UK by June. Iceberg is starting in limited quantities.

Spring greens & kale from Lancashire are very good quality

Broccoli - UK new season, will be supplied from both Scotland and Lincolnshire this summer. This is in response to the problems seen last year; We have planted with geographic spread to minimise any weather related disruption again this year. Some of the early broccoli in Lincolnshire has already seen some damage due to frost during planting some plants have "Gone Blind" this is when instead of a bud, or head, there is just a bare green stub at the centre of the plant which will never form.

Cauliflower & green cabbage are also running slightly behind due to a cold spring and some frosts when planted. Current warmer weather is helping move things along and the new crop is now expected w/c 12th June.

COMING TO AN END

- **Braeburn** from the UK has now ended so we move to Italian supplies.

- **Cucumber** from Spain is now drawing to an end.



VEGETABLES

Baby vegetables – Currently South African production but we may see some UK crops later in the summer depending on the weather conditions.

Cucumber new season is now underway.

Capsicums & tomato, new season from our Dutch suppliers, quality is very good.

Sugar snaps & mange tout – A mix of suppliers. Kenya are only able to supply reduced volumes currently and June will see the start of Zimbabwe supplies. Quality is very good.

Beans – Kenya supply will continue and the quality is good.

Sweet potatoes – Egyptian supply has now ended. USA currently supplying until Honduran supply in June.

Garlic - Spanish supply and very good.

Butternut squash – South African crop is now being supplied with Guatemala as a backup. It is expected there will be an early finish to the season. European will start in August, however, Ukrainian is not expected to be seen so there could be a gap.

FRUIT

Peach & Nectarine - Spanish are now underway. **Apricot & Cherry** are also available.

Strawberries - Spain is reducing now as we approach the end of May. Portuguese is being supplied but Dutch may also be seen as UK is running slightly late. We are seeing dribs and drabs of tunnel crop and expect UK crops to be in full production by w/c 4th June.

Raspberries - Morocco/Spain/Portugal - including Amira, Adelita, Glen Lyon and Grandeur varieties - with some UK coming from July onwards.

Blackberries - Mexican and some Spanish - Kiowa and Tupi varieties. Berry quality is good with even sized fruits in the punnet. We may see some early season Spanish crops towards mid-June.

Blueberries - Chilean supply has now moved to Morocco and up into Spain - Northern European supply will commence by July.

EXOTICS

Avocado - South African supply Fuerter variety, smooth skin and quality good.

Chillies - Moroccan supply until summer, moving to Dutch late summer, with Spanish and Portuguese as a backup.

Figs - Our Brazilian supply is going well with Turkish following in the late summer.

Mango - Brazilian Tommy Atkins are good.

Limes - Brazilian supply has been challenging, but quality and size are good.

Ginger - Peruvian should continue and have been very good quality.

Banana shallots - French supply from store, no problems foreseen with new crop later this summer.

SEASONAL MENU INSPIRATION:

British Heritage Tomato Salad Topped Sourdough - Whipped Goats Cheese & Pickled Pink Onions

Here's a simple & quick summer recipe from Chef Martin using great local produce.

Find this recipe and many more on our website oliverkayproduce.co.uk

Check out the list of ingredients and recipe on our website:

1. Take 4 slices of sour dough and grill, then rub with roasted garlic and oil - set to one side.
2. Cut the tomatoes randomly so you get different textures and shapes then mix with finely diced chilli, drained olive antipasti and a little cold pressed oil. Leave to marinade.
3. In a blender add the goat's cheese and cream and blend until smooth then add olive oil - Set to one side
4. Slice the onions then add the vinegar, salt, chilli and sugar stir well and allow to steep for a few minutes.
5. Top the toasted sour dough with the tomato mix, pipe the goat's cheese on and finish with the pickled pink onions, pea shoots and black pepper if you wish.



TIME SAVING PREP... We have a great range of prepped produce; from sliced and diced veg, to fruit salads. Check out our range online or contact our team for more info.



For enquiries or more information about any of the products mentioned in the Crop Report, or to place an order, please contact our team who will be happy to help:

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