

# Fruit and veg prices soar due to weather-induced shortages



Dear valued customers,

You may have seen the recent press coverage of empty fruit and veg shelves, and even rationing of certain fresh produce. We wanted to provide a timely update and some explanation as to what's happening behind the scenes.

Extreme weather events are creating a significant drop in volumes across a number of fresh produce categories. The resulting supply-chain issues (as well as inflation) are driving exceptionally high spot prices.

The group managing director of Nationwide Produce, Tim O'Malley, has said that the spot price of certain fruit and vegetables is running at 100-200 per cent above the norm.

"I can honestly say that in the 40 years I've been in this trade, I've never seen such high spot prices across such a broad range of products for such a prolonged period of time." He gave the following examples in a market update written on 14 February:

PRODUCT	CURRENT SPOT PRICE	NORMAL SPOT PRICE
Yellow peppers	£22	£8-£9
Red peppers	£21	£8-£9
Green peppers	£13	£7-£8
Round tomatoes	£14	£6-£8
Cherry tomatoes	£17	£5-£6
Aubergines	£18	£6-£8
Courgettes	£12	£5-£7
Cucumbers	£16	£5-£7
Iceberg	£19	£6-£8
Cos	£15	£7-£8
Gem	£18	£10-£12
Broccoli	£20	£8-£10
Cauliflower	£14 (was £24 last week)	£6-£8
Red cabbage x25kg net	£15	£7-£9
Dutch onions x4kg net	£700/tonne	£250-£280/t



**Abnormal weather conditions are adversely affecting, and reducing the availability of crops across the UK, Europe and parts of North Africa.**

After the warmest summer on record, December saw temperatures across the UK dip as low as -8°C for a prolonged period. Even protected crops suffer when you experience such a sharp drop in temperature, so UK supplies of year-round vegetables such as carrots, cabbage and cauliflower have been affected, with many frost-ruined fields completely written off.

A main source of fresh produce for Britain in winter is Spain, and the cold weather there has led to a major reduction in yield, as well as other quality issues like size and viruses etc. Nationwide Produce reported the following Almerian crop shortfalls due to abnormal weather conditions in January:

Tomatoes - 35%	Cucumbers - 50%	Aubergines - 35%	Courgettes - 40%	Peppers - 40%
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This means that the UK will continue to experience poor availability, and it looks unlikely that spot prices will drop back down to normal levels for the rest of this season – we will keep you updated.

Kind regards,

**The team at Cheesmans**

