your food solutions partner

UK Market Report

March 2017

Meat & Poultry

Beef

The UK beef market is currently stable and showing little movement in wholesale carcass pricing. Demand for fillet and rib remains strong and pricing is unlikely to reduce before summer demand is likely to push pricing higher later in the year. Expected increases in UK kill numbers are likely to be offset by lower carcass weights, as producers bow to supermarket demands on specification.

South American beef exports continue to show strong volumes. Uruguay and Argentina continue to lobby for access to the UK market post-Brexit, so South America continues to be a good source of value beef.

Chinese beef consumption doubled in 2016 from 2015. While a large proportion of Chinese imports are sourced from the southern hemisphere, UK producers continue to chase this lucrative export market while exchange rates are favourable.

Pork

Wholesale pricing remains high year on year, both EU and UK; although current prices are stable with weekly fluctuations below a penny per kg.

Demand for bellies continues to be strong, keeping prices inflated. Pork loin is showing much better value and will show strong returns on Spring grill menus with loin steaks, chops or cutlets.

Lamb

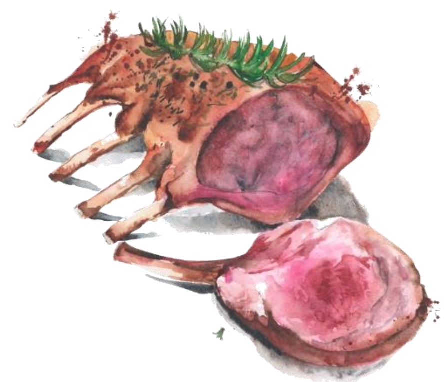
UK lamb exports increased 10% in value from £300M in 2015 to £330M in 2016; while a domestic slow-down in demand for UK lamb from late last year has meant that end of 2016 season supply has not become too tight, as sometimes happens at this time of year. Whilst prices for best end and saddles remain high, they have stabilised.

Although the UK has enjoyed a warm start to 2017 so far, a cold snap and heavy snow could still play havoc with the lambing season and progress of young lambs towards slaughter age. Indications and talk around the marketplace are of higher new season lamb pricing than seen in 2016.

Supplies of imported lamb coming into the UK continue to track below 2016 levels. With New Zealand and Australian flock numbers remaining low due to drought issues, this situation will not reverse in the short term.

Poultry

While Avian Flu and its impact on labelling of free range eggs has seen media coverage recently, there is as yet no effect being seen across UK and EU poultry markets.



Seafood

Early spring is all about shellfish; whether it's Irish oysters, early native lobsters or Scottish mussels. Using shellfish on spring menus is a must, as the UK waters are providing world class produce during the early months of the year.

Now In Season:

Mussels
Oysters

Farmed

Salmon - is now showing early signs of recovery as availability and quality looks much better. Pricing is expected to remain firm until late summer, when pricing could start to soften quickly. Chilean producers (who supply the American market) are expecting increased production this year which will ease demand on European stocks. Added to this, Norway is predicting an 11% increase in production through 2017.

Seabass & Bream - The farms in Turkey and Greece are holding back stocks to improve numbers of larger fish for the summer season, when demand for these sizes peak. Larger fish at the moment will bring a premium so maybe avoid until the summer.

Shellfish

Lobster - Canadian lobsters are excellent quality currently with good availability on all sizes. The exchange rate is keeping prices inflated, however. Native lobster will start in early April through to November.

Mussels - are in season and should be on all spring menus. They are in their prime in early spring and are always a crowd pleaser. Moules and Frites is the classic way to serve to this beautiful shellfish.

Premium & Wild

Monkfish - Scottish landings are showing excellent quality for this once overlooked native white fish; try Posh Scampi on your menu for a real spring special. This meatier white fish can be used for many different styles of cooking, it marinades very well and can hold stronger spices for Asian style dishes.

Cod - The Norwegian fishing strike has now ended, so we expect to see a good run of landings at markets with pricing stable until early summer when spawning starts and quotas are being stretched.

Fruit & Vegetables

Following on from last month's well publicised growing problems with flooding, snow and sub-zero temperatures, growing conditions are now improving. Supply of the most badly affected products such as lettuce, tomatoes and courgettes is slowly recovering but prices remain significantly up YoY and usage should be limited where ever possible. The general view is that supply should be maintained on all core Spanish lines until the end of the season but sizes will be considerably smaller than normal leading to higher prices for larger sizes.

Vegetables

Cauliflower - Cold weather in January in both the UK and Europe held back some of the winter crop resulting in smaller cauliflowers being available. Milder conditions during February has improved both the quality and availability and weather permitting this should improve further as we move through March.

Broccoli - Due to recent adverse weather in Spain some issues with mould may be noticed and customers are advised to keep stocks tight. Availability and quality should improve as we move into March

Salads

Peppers - Prices are starting to ease following last months increases, as both availability & 'size' of the peppers continues to improve.

Tomatoes - Most suppliers are currently sourcing product from Morocco, but a cooler Mediterranean climate at present has slowed production from North Africa. You may notice more orange/yellow than dark red fruit over the coming weeks.

Fruits

Melons - The majority of supply is currently Brazilian. Quality is generally OK, however some over mature fruit has been picked up at the point of delivery to suppliers. Supply will move to Central American fruit during March and quality should improve.

Strawberries - Supply is currently coming from Spain/Egypt. After a delay in production caused by the extreme weather conditions, Spanish strawberries are now coming through, some Egyptian crop will also continue to be used to maintain availability.