

Freak weather ruins British crops, price increases expected

Adverse weather conditions in Britain have had disastrous effects on food crops and caused chaos for farmers this year. The combination of warmer temperatures and record rainfall last month ruined fields growing vegetables and led to some crops maturing far too early. This in turn could lead to higher prices as traditional winter vegetables, such as carrots, leeks cauliflower and potatoes could now be in short supply

Carrots and parsnips are among vegetables usually left in the ground to remain fresh until they are harvested - a process called dry storing - but the deluge soaked the soil and ruined them.

The waterlogged fields, some flooded by rivers bursting their banks, also made it impossible to get tractors on to them to rescue at least some of the crop.

Damp conditions created further problems for other vegetables: mildew, leaf rot and other diseases have hit kale and other leafy crops.

At the same time, the warmer temperatures caused cauliflowers and new potatoes to be ready far earlier than normal, which could mean shortages in months to come and subsequent price rises.

The extreme conditions have been blamed on both climate change and the natural weather phenomenon El Nino. And it's not just Britain where food has been hit.

High winter temperatures in Spain caused an outbreak of pest and fungus affecting tomatoes, cucumbers and red, yellow and green peppers.

John Sedgwick of industry supplier for Produce World Group said the weather was causing havoc with both the quality and quantity of many winter vegetables.

Matt Jones, a buyer for specialists Reynolds, added: "We expect an early end of season for round tomatoes and plum tomatoes with a noticeable dip in supply in May and reduced availability of cucumbers over the next month."

Source: [express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/151974/Freak-weather-ruins-British-crops,-price-increases-expected> (20-01-2016)