

## UK onion crop down 40%

Weather conditions in the UK mean that onion yields have been severely affected, and the national crop is likely to be only 60 per cent of normal, according to the British Onion Producers Association (BOPA). This will mean that higher levels of imports from the southern hemisphere will be required to make up the shortfall in 2019. Consumers can also expect onions in the shops to be smaller.

Speaking after a BOPA meeting, Chairman Tim Elcombe said: “UK onion production has been severely affected by the adverse weather conditions in 2018. The ‘Beast from the East’ caused havoc with plantings and drillings in the spring resulting in many crops being planted up to six weeks late.

“The prolonged hot and dry period over the summer then put onion crops under extreme stress and adversely impacted the growing potential. Despite British growers’ best efforts to minimise the impact through round the clock irrigation, the onion crop has been severely affected.”

Harvest has now been completed in most areas and at a recent BOPA marketing meeting it was concluded that yields are on average 40% down compared with a normal season.

The extreme weather conditions have also affected the size of onions. Growers confirmed that crops are a lot smaller than normal and a lot of retailers have reduced their size specifications to maximise the volumes of British crop that can be used.

British Growers were not alone in facing a difficult season. The picture is similar across most of Europe. Supplies from the UK and Europe are expected to start to run down in early spring 2019. and importers will be looking to southern hemisphere producers to make up the shortfall until the UK new season crop is ready in summer 2019.

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