

The Grocer

Focus On: Fresh produce

By Grace Duncan Grace.Duncan@thegrocer.co.uk

Publishing: 24 June 2023

Advertising deadline: 9 June 2023

Submissions deadline: 2 June 2023

After some kicking and dragging, environment secretary Thérèse Coffey has hinted the government might take a look at the supply chain problems responsible for recent fruit and veg shortages. It follows months of problems in the category, with shelves frequently short of fruit and veg, suppliers dumping crops they can't sell profitably, labour shortages, Brexit problems and lingering pandemic effects. At the heart is the relationship between supermarkets and the British farming industry. So what are retailers doing to support fruit and veg growers? What are suppliers doing to stay in business given rising input costs and sometimes suppressed retail prices? And how can government help to maintain self-sufficiency in these categories?

Retailer support: It has lately been revealed that cucumber growers are having to dump crops since it's not worth paying the cost of transport to supermarkets. With the finances not working out for many fruit and veg farmers, how can supermarket reset relations with the industry?

Suppliers: Growers of fruit and veg face rising input costs, a difficult labour market and Brexit-related issues. How are they adapting to protect their margins and keep the industry alive?

Government response: The government has just called for a summit to look at soaring food prices. It's a topic at the centre of fruit and veg's problems. So what can officials do to keep British produce on our tables?