



EURONION

20 Years of co-ordinating bulb onion production across Europe

EURONION

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Euronion Newsletter – February 2018

Apologies of course for somehow missing the deadline, but as we say here “better late than never”! It is of course the least noteworthy slot, as not much is happening in what is proving to be a cold wet miserable winter here in the UK!

We have **Brexit** and it seem whatever time of day or night there is some discussion about this topic. The government debates all these proposals, whatever to do or hope to do and M. Barnier, the chief EU negotiator has this ability to demolish it all in a couple of sentences.

On the general **onion scene** there is unrelenting pressure on **prices** in a season where long term storage is well short of being a vintage year. Whilst Brexit might save the UK industry (ie import duties and vast delays at UK ports) **competition** at home is increasingly fierce as **Aldi** and **Lidl** open new store after new store, even in Boston where the new Lidl has just opened next to a large Tesco.

Lidl has 700 stores (5% of market) and plan to have 1,500, **Aldi** with 760 (3.6% of market) plan to have 1,000 stores by 2022. Over Christmas half of the shoppers in the UK visited either a Lidl or an Aldi store.

Winter Onions (mostly sets, variety Shakespeare) are looking good at 2-3 true leaves and could be wanted if the stored crop season finishes up 4 weeks earlier than the previous season.

Old crop was still being marketed in mid July 2017 when the overwintered (and all the early spring sets) were all available at once!



Currently there are **plenty of onions** (reds and browns) in store although **wastage** is creeping upwards. Main issues are **fusarium** and **skinning** BUT above all that the supermarkets are increasingly demanding **70-90mm** grade as 3 inline, all **British** these days and there is an increasing issue with the surplus of under 70's which have a much lower value. There is now a sudden demand (worldwide) to **eliminate plastic packaging** and of course 3 inline is plastic netting! The planting of new crop early sets (**Jagro, Alpha & Spitfire**) is underway and the season will soon be in full swing.

Whatever the prospects maybe it seems the acreage will be similar this year. Nothing to do with the profitability of onions, more that no other option is any better!

David O'Connor

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