

Garlic supply to UK hit by disruption in Ukraine and Spain, reports importer

Detail Introduction :

The UK's supply of garlic has been impeded by disruption in Ukraine and Spain, exotic produce importer United has warned.

The London company's business development manager, Nilay Kamdar, attributed "some disruptions" to supply to escalating fuel costs in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, along with related industrial strikes by haulers in Spain, the UK's chief source of garlic.



The strike over inflation and the soaring price of fuel had "led to a significant number of haulers not coming to work and a limited number who are having to work off very high trucking costs due to demand", he added. Kamdar's warning came after Spain's National Association of Producers & Marketers of Garlic warned of delays to garlic exports due to strike action and because "the war has worsened logistics that were already affected by the pandemic crisis".

Two years of soaring shipping costs and intensified demand for increasingly expensive carriage, both on sea and on land, had made it more difficult for importers and exporters of relatively low-cost fresh produce, Kamdar said.

By late 2021, shipping costs had surged by around 600% compared with before the pandemic. While some of the restrictions that reduced demand and hampered trade had in the meantime been eased in most parts

world, the war in Ukraine ensured energy prices and shipping costs remained high.

Pandemic-related curbs were recently reintroduced in parts of China, where stringent 'zero Covid' lockdowns, including in Shanghai, one of the world's biggest ports, had further compromised supply. Both the UK and a European Union source "a small portion of their garlic" from China, Kamdar said.

The recent reduction in the number of ships crossing from France to Dover after the suspension of services by P&O Ferries also contributed to slower imports, Kamdar added.

The Port of Dover last week saw long lines of trucks and cars attempting to leave the UK, queues that were largely due to a mix of ferry shortages and bad weather but likely made worse by a temporary breakdown in the government's Goods Vehicle Movement System, border management IT apparatus for haulers.