

October 2015

Pumpkin season in full swing

Halloween is almost upon us and soon pumpkins across the UK will be carved into spooky lanterns.

For the DGM Growers team, the UK pumpkin season, running from late September to early November, is one of our busiest times.

Halloween is now the third largest annual event in terms of public spending (runner up to Christmas and Valentines Day). Back in 2001, UK consumers spent a modest £12 million on Halloween related items. Skip forward to 2014 where a phenomenal £280 million was spent. This year, trends indicate that as much as £330 million of Halloween products will be sold.

Demand for pumpkins is also increasing every year with 2014 demand up by 35%. For DGM Growers, our main priority is meeting customer demand. In total, around 10 million pumpkins are expected to be sold this year. Only 5% of these crops will be eaten and most supermarkets now offer separate "edible" pumpkins. Pumpkins have a very subtle, honey like flavour and are best mixed with stronger ingredients to create tasty dishes. Head over to www.thinkvegetables.co.uk for a delicious spicy pumpkin risotto recipe.

Pumpkin crops are particularly sensitive to rain, if rain levels are high, pumpkins can absorb too much water which can lead to rots and in extreme cases, the pumpkins can even explode.

Our Cambridgeshire grower has yielded a good crop this year, with average August rainfall levels helping to contribute to sturdy, vibrant pumpkins. Pumpkins grown at our Kent sources have been trickier to work with, with rots starting to occur in some of the crop, meaning reduced yields. This has seen DGM Technologists working at source to help manage the pumpkins and negate the risk of any with shelf-life issues being sent to stores and markets.

Tim Allen, Commercial Manager for DGM Growers, says "The pumpkin season can be challenging, particularly as growing conditions vary year on year. For the DGM team, it's about predicting yield levels and helping to support growers in areas of higher rainfall."

This year DGM will be supplying carving, ghost, munchkin and superfreak pumpkins across the UK. There is an increasing demand from consumers for new varieties and DGM can drive sales performance by offering new types of pumpkins and opportunities for our growers.



Ghost pumpkins are now available at many supermarkets

Munchkin pumpkins are tiny but can still be carved into mini spooky lanterns

