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By Ed Leahy

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British onion shortfall prompts imports



Nightmare weather last year hit stocks of the British crop meaning shoppers will be buying from abroad until the summer

UK suppliers are importing onions from abroad to make up for a shortfall in the UK stocks after last year's torrid weather.

According to British Onions, stocks are at "very low levels" with the industry closing the gap to the new season by procuring onions from New Zealand, Egypt and Chile until the new season begins in July and August.

The producers association welcomed better conditions this year describing it as a "positive start to 2019". The "Beast from the East" caused planting problems for many crops in 2018, but British Onions lamented the critical lack of rainfall that followed.

Despite more benign weather this spring, the dry conditions remain a concern for growers. Ground water levels are far below average for this time of year following a relatively dry winter.

Tim Elcombe, chair of the British Onion Producers Association said: "We need to return to a more settled weather pattern for the 2019 season. Another hot dry summer will undoubtedly put crops under pressure again."