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By Fred Searle

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Sweet potato shortages hit UK

Supermarket supply even tighter than expected after extreme weather in US last autumn



Sweet potato shortages have hit the UK, with major retailers running low and charging higher prices.

According to The Daily Mail stock levels in London and the South East are just one 20th of what they would be normally.

The shortage has been expected following poor growing conditions in the US last autumn. First Hurricane Florence hit North Carolina and then there were sustained heavy rains in the southern

states of Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama.

This wet weather prevented growers from getting equipment out into the fields to harvest their crops, driving down volumes by 11 per cent.

Yields and supply this year are expected to be higher than last season, although the harvest is yet to get underway.

For the time being, supermarkets say the shortage is worse than anticipated and shoppers are complaining they can't find sweet potatoes anywhere at a normal price.

Guatemala, Mexico and Honduras all export a small volume but efforts to import the vegetable from China have been largely unsuccessful.

The Daily Mail reported that Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Morrisons, Aldi and Waitrose all said they were all being affected by the shortage.