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By Ed Leahy

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Waitrose relaxes spec for "wonky" sprouts



Retailer reveals wet autumn has created hardships for farmers, with buyers taking on as much of UK crop as possible

An exceptionally wet autumn has caused greater numbers of misshapen Brussels sprouts ahead of Christmas.

In response Waitrose has relaxed its specifications to make sure farmers use as much of the UK crop as possible, with the flavour being described as "superb" this year.

Waitrose says it will be selling sprouts of all shapes and sizes to support its growers.

Lucy Broughton, sprouts buyer at Waitrose & Partners says: "Love them or hate them, Brussels have had a tricky time this year but our farmers have worked incredibly hard to make the best out of a bad spate of weather.

"Whilst they might not be perfect in appearance, the quality and flavour this year is superb and some of the more rough around the edges one will be in our Shredded Sprouts with Chestnuts & Pancetta."

In line with other brassicas,

sprouts have sold surprisingly well in recent years, with Waitrose reporting that in January 2019, Brussels sprouts sales grew 20 per cent, driven by baby sprouts and kalettes.

Waitrose revealed that new product "sproutlets" will be back on the shelves this year, following a successful launch in 2018, with customer searches for them up 78 per cent on the Waitrose website.