

Amid the potential grape shortages given heavy rains in Chile, according to a company in the UK, the country doesn't seem to expect shortages nor rising prices at the same level that the U.S. may see.

Currently, the UK is adequately supplied with fruit arriving mainly from South Africa, India and Chile, with tail-end volumes still coming from Peru.

"There have been fewer boxes sent from Chile, more fruit from South Africa even though there were rains that affected condition, and volumes starting to arrive from India are strong," Neil Denny, Procurement Manager at [Richard Hochfeld](#) told FreshFruitPortal.com.

Volumes from India are tracking ahead of last year, ending week 8 with 898 boxes compared to 893 boxes year-on-year, he said.

Regarding Chile, white seedless has been the hardest hit from the rains, so what was expected from Chile will be replaced with volumes from India and after from Brazil and then Egypt in mid-May, according to Denny.

"For the company, red seedless volumes come from the northern Ovalle region of Chile, which are completely unaffected and the main bulk of our program remains according to plan."

Black seedless will be "touch and go" on whether there will be enough volume.

Denny said: "We have to be mindful when we discuss Chile, as there is a challenge for us as importers to separate the fruit that is completely unaffected so it doesn't get damaged by association."

"Chile has been very responsible in publishing all of the information so the correct decisions can be made for businesses and that has been really beneficial."

Prices are expected to be quite high in the U.S., though Denny doesn't see that the UK will be in a similar position.

"In the UK we have more options in terms of Indian and South African fruit that maybe they don't have in the U.S."

In response to being asked if Chile will continue to have a place in UK's market in coming years, Denny said, "I don't think anybody is going to take strategic decisions based on one rain in Chile, though if it happens again the following year then maybe the issue will be

revisited”.

There is a potential risk if retailers based their demand forecast on last year the numbers may not be accurate so the UK may have over-programmed itself, leading to too much fruit in the market, Denny said.

“I think it is going to be a challenging time, but we do have alternatives and options.”