

As the impact of floods and cold weather hits Australia, the farmer's federation predicts that fruit and vegetable shortages will continue for six weeks, with supply levels returning to normal in September, but warns that distribution issues and high prices could persist.

According to [a report by The Guardian](#), the acting chief executive of the National Farmers' Federation, Ash Salardini, said that empty shelves can be directly linked to poor weather conditions experienced earlier this year in parts of northern New South Wales and Queensland.

"During the winter months, that's where we get most of our fruit and veg ... in four to six weeks the rest of Australia should have some of those fruit and veg come online," Salardini stated, adding that "we should have a lot less availability issues in four to six weeks' time."

However, Salardini explained that there could still be supply chain disruptions to get fruit and vegetables to the market, as more products become available.

Additionally various supermarket chains have also warned of extreme fruit and vegetable shortages. Paul Turner, who is Woolworths' general manager of fruit and vegetables, said that many growers were still experiencing the effects of heavy rain from earlier in the year.

"This has pushed back the planting and harvesting of crops, with reduced availability continuing to be exacerbated by cooler temperatures and low levels of sunlight," he explained.

Another retailer, Coles, reported low supplies of berries, lettuce, beans, tomatoes, broccoli and herbs due to the devastating floods in northern NSW and Queensland, resulting in higher prices.

"Produce pricing is subject to supply but as soon as volumes recover, we will be working hard to get prices down for our customers as quickly as we can," a company spokesperson commented.

In south-east Queensland, "lettuces haven't fully grown due to the extremely cold weather", the spokesman added and as a result, Coles is selling two smaller lettuces for the price of one.

"The initiative allows growers in the Lockyer Valley to use some of the iceberg lettuce crops that have been impacted on by the recent wet weather and will improve availability for customers."

Moreover, a spokesman for Aldi commented on the supply issues: “We continue to support our local growers and hope that growing conditions become more favorable to support improved yields and ongoing sustainable production.”

To conclude, Tyson Cattle, an AusVeg spokesperson, predicted that although supply may return to normal in the coming months “we won’t go back to previous pricing levels, given that growers’ costs have increased ... by 35% to 40%.”

The seasonal outlook suggests that zucchinis, green beans, tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, spring onions, Asian leafy greens and berries will remain in short supply until July, but poor weather has also affected fresh herb stocks, and availability is not expected to improve until August.