Harvest Report 2013 - Vegetables

Right across our countryside it’s harvest time. This is a spectacular climax of the farming year, when fortunes are won or lost in the attempt to put food on our plates. Our farmers have spent all year carefully tending crops helped by the very latest science, but they are still completely at the mercy of our fickle weather. Have our farmers grown enough to feed us and which crops are set to be winners and losers in this year’s harvest?

Potatoes
Potatoes had a terrible 2012 - with some crops down by a third - potatoes were smaller last year too and suffered more scab on their skins, as well as the dreaded blight disease.

1. How will this year’s potato harvest compare with 2012?
   a) It should be much the same quantity but better quality
   b) It should increase by 20%
   c) It should decrease further and the price of chips will continue to rise

Broccoli and Lettuce
Broccoli and lettuce have been jostling for position on our dinner tables this year. Both had a slow start in the ground due to the cold, wet weather. However, the lettuce harvest caught up from being around three weeks behind at the start of the season.

2. The name of the professional body for salad growers is called ...
   a) The British Leafy Salad Association
   b) The Salad Growers Association
   c) The Lettuce Union

Onions
The onion harvest is still underway in the Eastern counties, but the cold weather put paid to some bulbs putting on the leaves they need to get big, leading to smaller bulbs at harvest time.

3. What percentage of the world’s production of onions is grown in the UK?
   a) 1%
   b) 10%
   c) 50%

4. Which of these vegetables is not part of the onion family …
   onions, leeks, garlic, scallions, lemon grass, chives, shallots

Asparagus
It’s no surprise that this early vegetable hasn’t done as well as our later crops. Harvest yields were down around 20%, which saw the Asparagus Festival in Evesham cancelled due to a poor crop.

5. How long is the Asparagus picking season in the UK?
   a) Four weeks
   b) Eight weeks
   c) Twelve weeks

Carrots
95% of the carrots we eat are grown in the UK. We harvest carrots all year round. The carrot harvest for 2013 has been estimated to be down around 8% on last year, however they will have caught up by next year.

6. Which of these carrot facts are true or false?
   a) Carrots are one of the rare vegetables which are more nutritious cooked than raw.
   b) Carrots are more nutritious when cut by a knife.
   c) Carrots can make a material as strong as carbon fibre.