



Abel & Cole

BRUSSELS
SPROUTING

A Christmas you can count on

Though it's been a year of uncertainty, there's one thing you can count on: a merry organic Christmas. The reindeer are still far from touching down, but we've been busy in the background for many months so that, come the big day, you can focus on the things that matter most.

Out in the field

Here at HQ, festive fruit & veg is something we think about all year long, as planning for the next harvest already starts when winter ends. To stay on top of things, we connect with our farmers daily. Here are just a few of the things we've been chatting about.

In Ormskirk, Organic Dan planted the seeds for his nutty Brussels sprouts in spring. Despite the summer heatwave, his moisture-loving crop is coming along nicely. Dan will know just when to chop down the stalks.



In Norfolk, Nick Walton's been keeping a keen eye on his parsnips, which have been in the ground since the end of May. He'll be rallying the troops soon enough to pluck - or in Nick's words "hoover" - them out of the earth.

Across the border, in the Monifieth hills north of Dundee, lies Andrew Skea's organic farm. It's pristine-looking, thanks to Andrew's perfectionist brother and father. At the moment, his red and purple potatoes are still nestled snugly in the soil. There's a few more weeks yet before Andrew's sweet, fluffy-fleshed spuds are ready to be lifted from the ground.



Meanwhile, in Herefordshire, Julia and Adrian Blackshaw are gearing up for their second-ever walnut harvest at Hermitage Farm. Their trees don't just offer cracking good walnuts though; the roots are great for soil structure and reduce flooding, and they're home to plenty of wildlife. It's organic farming in a nutshell.

Near Bristol, the lovely bunch at Organic Blooms are gearing up to hand-weave beautiful festive wreaths. The foliage and natural organic decorations they use are cultivated sustainably here in Britain without the use of chemical sprays. As one of the very first Soil Association certified organic flower growers in the UK, and a social enterprise, Organic Blooms are doing good in all kinds of ways.



All across the land, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, then. Well. Very slowly, still. But surely.



Meet our buyer

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Anne Rees,
Top-Ups and Flower
& Garden Buyer, an
Abel & Coler for 10 years

"We've planned the contents of this year's Christmas Fruit & Veg Boxes, tackling that ever-tricky issue of which veg make the perfect Christmas dinner. It's a tough decision!"

We're really pleased to offer beautiful wreaths from Organic Blooms again this year too. They're also growing our first ever mini Christmas trees! As always the range is completely sustainable and it's been lovely working with a team who understand that luxury shouldn't come at a cost."

Turkey like no other

For those of us who do choose to have meat on the table for Christmas dinner, you really can't do better than a KellyBronze turkey. On a patch of organic land in Danbury, Essex, the Kelly family has been raising top-notch turkey since 1971. In the early '80s they decided to set themselves apart from other breeders, so they chose to take on the less-popular but superior-tasting bronze turkeys. This move is testament to what has become the Kelly philosophy of quality over everything else.

Since 2004, Paul rules the roost, and his KellyBronze turkeys have made quite a name for themselves. While they're simply a better tasting breed of turkey, there's more to it than that. *"The best Christmas turkey is the right breed, grown to maturity, dry plucked and hung just like a pheasant,"* says Paul, and we wholeheartedly agree. On top of that, the birds are being raised free-range too. *"They'll be out on the grass, no doubt jumping around on some straw bales,"* says Philip, who's worked with Paul for many, many years. He tells us the turkeys will be around 15 weeks old by the end of September. The birds are reared to full maturity over a whole seven months, so they still have plenty of straw-bale jumping ahead of them.



The amount of attention, care and time that goes into rearing one of Paul's KellyBronze turkeys makes them particularly special. **In fact, we've been awarded the prestigious Good Turkey Award from Compassion in World Farming for our organic turkeys.** It's a stamp of approval for the impressively high animal welfare standards Paul has. **Your Christmas dinner deserves no less.**



Meet our buyer

Ilyas Wouda Deshmukh,

Chill Buying Manager,
an Abel & Coler for
two and a half years

"We want to make sure that the meat our customers eat is organic, and of a high quality."

Christmas might be one of those rarer occasions where meat is on the menu in a big way."



Chocolate made with care

What would Christmas be without the sumptuous, organic fairtrade chocolate from Cocoa Loco in West Sussex? At the heart of their creations lie superb, ethically sourced cocoa beans from the Dominican Republic.

But there's plenty of care and patience thrown into the mix too, since Sarah Payne and her team of merry chocolatiers hand-make all their festive treats. This hands-on approach has made the stop-start year especially challenging.



First, the pandemic brought Cocoa Loco's chocolate-making to a grinding halt. As soon as it was deemed safe enough to return to their pots and moulds in May, Sarah and her crew picked up right where they left off to catch up on the precious time they'd lost.



READY TO
BE MOULDED

Then came the meltingly hot August heatwave, which paused the production of their milk chocolate Santas yet again. When the mercury finally dropped, the team dashed onwards, creating chocolate magic like only Cocoa Loco can: with skilled hands and a generous sprinkling of joy.

"Christmas is in the diary, we know what date it is, and whether customers will be celebrating as a household or with families and friends, it's going to happen and they will want amazing chocolates," says Sarah adamantly.

Cocoa Loco are set on putting smiles on faces come December. And what better way to do that than with some heavenly, lovingly-made chocolate.



Meet our buyer

Abigail Allen,
Pantry and Household
Buyer, an Abel & Coler
for 10 years

"From April we were looking at and tasting samples. It's obviously the best part of being a Buyer, especially where chocolate is concerned.

We then let the lovely Sarah, Rory and Frances at Cocoa Loco know which of their chocolate really took our fancy."



WREATH IN
THE MAKING



We don't know what kind of a Christmas to expect this year. But what we do know is that you can count on us, and our merry band of farmers, makers and bakers.

Any questions? Talk to our elves...
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