

[Are these people insane?](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Worstall](#) [2] | Saturday 21 July 2012

I think we've noticed that this summer hasn't been all that good. Farmers have also noticed and a number of crops have suffered from [the weather](#) [3].

The British carrot harvest has only just begun, several weeks late, and when they are pulled, farmers are finding many to be shorter than usual.....But the harvest is not just at risk from the wet, cold and dark conditions ? slugs are devouring crops. If they are not burrowing down to chomp on tiny tubers, they have crawled all over infant crops on the surface. Maize ? or corn ? has been terribly afflicted by slugs.

And this loss doesn't just threaten the heavenly August sweetcorn season. A Dorset farmer told me how slugs have eaten through large tracts of maize grown as cover for pheasants, so we can expect fewer wild birds in the autumn.....

So, carrots, maize, pheasants and potatoes all in short supply. What should we do about this?

Ben Raskin, head of horticulture at the Soil Association, who has spent much of his career trying to persuade us of the merits of knobbly veg, says we all must pull together to help the farmers.

?There are going to be shortages of carrots in particular, and those that we do pull might not meet standards on appearance. But it is still important that the supermarkets buy rain-affected produce, and shoppers choose it over imports,? he says.

What?

The fact that British potato farmers have been unable to pick their crop out of waterlogged fields has seen 1,000 tons of potatoes being imported from Belgium a week to cover the shortage.

So would you like a Flemish potato chip with your beer-battered flounder? I think not. But unless the jet stream takes a turn in our favour soon and puts an end to the big soak, that is what you'll get.

One little detailed point. 1,000 tonnes of spuds a week is, umm, even if it carries on all year, around and about [1% of UK consumption](#) [4]. Small potatoes really.

But look at what they are saying: they've leaped right over the shark and into loonie land.

You can just about make the case that we ought to eat local foods: might taste better, might create some lovely community feeling, bit of healthy exercise digging the allotment even. But we also know that relying on a small geographic area for food leaves us open to serious problems. If, as and when the murrains, floods, droughts and plagues arrive then we're at risk of having no food at all. As countless historical famines remind us.

This so recently invented trade thing, the ability finally, to carry large amounts of food across such

geographic regions so that famine as a result of no food (as opposed to Sen's famine as a result of no purchasing power) is an historical oddity. Now that we've finally got this and we've also the murrain and floods (the drought was in the spring recall and the plague is clearly just on the horizon) the answer is that we should not use this trade?

We finally, in the last century and a bit, have produced the solution to localised food shortages and we've now got people insisting that we shouldn't use it? Just munch on the rotten potatoes, the stubby carrots and the drowned maize because....well because why?

The only reason I can think of is that the water's got in between their ears.

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