



# fresh Directions

December 1st, 2011

*An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.*

**Apples** ↔ Washington reds are still producing more extra-fancy grade. There are some fancy grade reds but the demand for them has been strong. Reds continue to peak on 80-100's. Golden Delicious are peaking on 88/100's and are still producing more of the Washington Extra Fancy grade. Many suppliers have limited supplies of Golden's this year. Granny-Smith are peaking on 88's-113's and are heavier to the higher grades. Galas are mostly small but Mexican export demand remains strong so the availability is light. Galas are still peaking on 88-113's. The Gala demand has been strong and the market is higher. Washington Honey Crisp is still very large but supplies are light as most suppliers are close to the end of the season. Cameo's, Pink Lady's, Jona Golds, Fuji's, & Braeburns are also still available.

**Asparagus** ↔ This market is steady. Large sizes out of Mexico continue to be on the light side in availability, with the predominance of sizing coming in small and standard sizing. Supplies are moderate, overall. The quality continues to be good. Peruvian product is moderate in availability. Jumbo sizing continues to have better availability out of Peru.

**Avocado** ↔ Mexico inventories and harvest continue steady and looks to stay this way over the next couple of weeks. Mexico is producing 90 to 95% of the fruit in the US at this time. Chile's volume coming to the US remains very light, but looks to increase sometime in December.

**Bell Peppers** Western ↔ Green Bells expected to increase in supplies. Production will be mainly large fruit with excellent quality as all are from new fields. Markets remain steady. Colored bell peppers continue demand exceeds supplies. Markets remain very unsettled. Relief ought to come soon as Coachella production begins and some Mexican Growers begin harvesting shortly. **Eastern** ↑ Georgia is officially done with pepper this week and Central and southern Florida are in full swing on their pepper. With heavy rain moving through those regions, they have pushed the market up a few dollars. However, with Nogales prices low and minimal demand, this market should drop over the next few days.

**Broccoli** ↓ This market is softer. Demand has fallen off after the holiday pull but supplies are on the moderate side. Yuma availability is better. Salinas still has availability if the need is there to load in this growing region. The overall quality is reported to be good. There are also supplies available in Scottsdale.

**Cauliflower** ↓ This market is softer. Availability is moderate to light in Yuma, but demand is off. Supplies continue to be on the light side in Santa Maria. Suppliers continue to have the best availability on twelve count sizing. The overall quality has been good.

**Celery** ↔ This market is steady. Salinas is just about finished with

production. Suppliers continue to be heaviest in availability to the 24 counts. Santa Maria as well as Oxnard looks to be the main areas of production. Demand has decreased due to the end of the holiday pull. The quality is good with no major issues to report at this time. Suppliers are willing to take product to Yuma for an extra charge.

**Citrus Lemons** ↑ Wet weather altered harvest pace and packing volumes, making for a very tight market. Small fruit will be very tight through December as fruit is sizing up quicker with the lighter crop hanging on the trees of the Desert crop this year.

**Oranges** ↔ The Navel crop quality looks very nice. Fruit is gaining better color. With cool weather forecast, we will see continued improvement in color.

**Lettuce Leaf** ↓ The romaine market is softer. Demand is down. Suppliers are moderate to good in their availability of this commodity. Demand is off on other leaf items as well. The main growing area is in Yuma. The Thermal area has also begun production with good product being reported. Supplies out of Santa Maria are light in availability. **Iceberg** ↓ The gap in pricing has closed on this commodity with most suppliers. Demand has slowed down, and some suppliers are looking to move volume orders at discounted pricing. Contracted suppliers have definitely loosened their pricing scheme. Lettuce carton weights have been on the lighter side due to puffy heads out of the Yuma region. Salinas will have some production if needed this week.

## **Melons** Cantaloupes ↔

Cantaloupe with limited volume and finishing up this week on domestic Arizona product. Nogales product is available with all sizes. The offshore season is starting with product availability in Pompano Beach and Manatee, Florida starting off in a very light way with fruit peaking to large sizes and limited availability on small fruit. The cantaloupe market is steady to lower. Offshore product will be available on the West Coast next week. **Honeydew** ↔ Mexican honeydew crossings into Nogales are now peaking to 6's. Domestic is cleaned up for the season. The market is steady. Florida off shore product is available and peaking to large fruit. Offshore product will be available on the West Coast next week.

**Onions** ↔ Yellows are mostly steady in all areas. Idaho/Oregon continues to peak on jumbos and colossals while Washington is producing more jumbos and mediums, and both areas will still discount for volume. Colorado has limited volume of yellows with some on the eastern side and some on the western slope. Yellow quality has been excellent in the northwest. Washington reds are still abundant and the volume deals remain. Idaho still has lighter supplies than Washington. The markets in both areas are steady on jumbos and mediums. White supplies are steady but the demand is up along with the market. Continue to plan ahead over the next few weeks as we expect freight rates to remain very high.

**Potatoes** ↔ Idaho's market is mostly steady on 80's and larger and steady to slightly stronger on 90's and smaller. Most shippers are still packing more of the larger counts than the smaller. Washington is steady on all sizes and they continue to peak on 60/70's while 80's and smaller remain short. Colorado is very limited on all cartons but they are still heavier to 70 count and larger. Russet quality has been good in all areas. Bakersfield, California continues shipping colored potatoes and all sizes are available. Washington & North Dakota both continue packing reds and gold's. Both areas are heavier to A size, then B's, and both are short on premiums. North Dakota is also higher on B reds. Wisconsin continues packing reds, whites, and golds and supplies are good but the Red B market is stronger. Idaho continues packing reds and golds as well and they are also peaking on A-size. Quality has been excellent in Washington while Wisconsin and North Dakota has ranged from excellent to fair.

**Tomatoes** Eastern ↔ With prices appearing to stay steady in the Palmetto/Ruskin district in Florida, look for volume to increase slightly over the next three weeks as more grower/shippers in the Immokalee/Naples area and the Ft. Pierce district on the East Coast beginning to harvest. Weather has straightened out somewhat, but yields are still down from where they were a year ago. Mature green tomatoes out of the Quincy/Tallahassee are have just about finished. **Western** ↔ This is officially the first 'down' week for mature green tomatoes in California since June, with all the fields being prepared for next year. Supplies of vine ripe tomatoes through Baja California have become more prominent, with crossings through Nogales, AZ and McAllen, TX increasing every week.

