

**From:** Stuart Sherman <ssherman40@aol.com>

**To:** sssherman40@aol.com

**Subject:** Mexico Market Update

**Date:** Thu, Feb 10, 2011 3:04 pm

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Sent: Thu, Feb 10, 2011 2:26 pm

Subject: Mexico Market Update

To Our Valued Customers,

Below is an update from one of the main growers in Mexico we work with. The situation is not good unfortunately, and we are looking at some difficult markets for the weeks to come.

**Key points:**

Avoid using squash, if you have to use it, use yellow not green

Use red/gold bell pepper NOT greens, red are the best value

Tomato and Roma markets will be very strong for some time, romas being the best value now

Celery prices are nuts, avoid using it

Whole leaf lettuce items are short in supply, fair quality and prices will remain high for the next couple weeks

Baby leaf items are short in supply and prices are higher but we should see relief in 7-10 days if the weather continues to cooperate

Corn, Bean, Eggplant, Cucumber, markets are all strong with higher prices

The synopsis this week is all about the cold weather. Temperatures at our ranch in La Cruz registered as low as 28 degrees Fahrenheit in some fields. Difficult time for our weekly update but here are a few points to keep in mind;

This is the first real freeze in southern Sinaloa since 1957. That being said information from our ranches is going to be updates as they see things developing. No one has enough experience in this matter to give an exact detailed estimate as to what is in store as we move forward. Plants under that much stress send a trigger that they are dying and ripen every fruit it has on the vine. That is how you see tomatoes that are 4x4's and as big as marbles ripening at the same time.

Short term there will be fruit harvested from plants that suffered damage that will have to cull heavily account due chill damage but that fruit is going to ripen now! Midterm we see that protected environments on all products experienced heavy if not total bloom drop along with some freeze damage to the plants themselves. This will mean that the end of February and first 1/2 of March there will be an even worse shortage of product than we will be experiencing now. Long term we will be feeling the effects of

this freeze even into the summer as Watermelons, Grapes and Mangoes have all suffered acreage losses due to the freeze. This coupled along with losses on young plants for our Spring vegetable crops.

Commodity specific;

Cucumbers – this product does not do well in any kind of cold. There is severe damage even in the shade house acreage. If 20% of this crop survives it will be a miracle. We have had heavy shipments and the pipelines are full but one morning we will wake up and there will be extremely light supplies to fill orders.

Green Bells – very little of this is planted in shadehouse for this production timeframe. Open field plantings did not fare well. This crop will be very affected also.

Red Bells – open fields severe damage, shadehouse mixed reports from plant and fruit damage to only bloom drop. Either way expect to see less and less daily as the month progresses with the most difficult times being from the bloom drop.

Vine Ripe Tomatoes – basically same as red bells. Everything salvageable is being picked as plants are throwing ripe fruit, quantities and qualities are greatly varied. Future volume has been greatly affected and even on plants that presently look sound they will have to start from scratch trying to make flowers that will be turning into fruit later in latter March.

Roma tomatoes – there is a very small percentage of the roma crop that was planted in shadehouse. The vast majority of acreage is in open fields. What can be salvaged in the near future will in no way portray what supplies will be like after this is picked off. How much of this current harvest will be culls is still to be determined. Either way long term prospects are sad at best.

Grape Tomatoes – same as prospects as tomatoes.

Squash –Green, Grey and Yellow – all squash is grown in cooler areas of the West Coast of Mexico so as to get that good color. They experienced the coldest temperatures and the most damage. There are pockets where losses were not 100 % but losses are extremely severe. Some plants will come back but the vast majority is lost. New acreage will begin in a very light way end of February first of March but we are really looking at the 10<sup>th</sup> of March and afterwards till we see any real relief.

Eggplants – this as a plant that is generally hearty but suffers cold poorly – what that means is that we have most of the crop lost. However the plants will be cut back and we anticipate they will start to grow and begin to flower again. Thus allowing for us to anticipate supplies down the road even though right now the situation is drastic. Please remember that eggplant is open field by a vast majority of the acreage.

On a brighter note;

We start receiving our first 2 loads of Ataulfo mangoes tomorrow both here and in McAllen. Sizes are running heavy 16-18's and volume should be right around the corner.

