



# fresh Directions

February 17th, 2011

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

**Apples** ↔ Washington reds continue heavier to premiums and the smaller sizes. Strong demand has kept the market steady to higher on all grades. Gold's are still producing mostly 88/100's and larger with very little small fruit. They are also still heavier to the Washington extra-fancy grade. Galas continue to peak on 100/113's and have good color while larger fruit remains tight. Granny-Smiths are still peaking on 88's and larger while 100 size and smaller remain extremely limited. Most suppliers continue to sub sizes and grades on small granny-smith orders. Fuji's are still high in color and continue to peak on 88's and larger. Small Fuji's remain tight.

**Asparagus** ↓ This market has softened on all sizes. Strangely enough, standard sizing is commanding a higher price than jumbos. Mexican supplies have been better due to warmer temperatures in the growing regions. Peruvian product is moderate in availability on standard and large sizes. The jumbo and extra large sizing is on the light side.

**Avocado** ↑ Avocado supplies crossing are lighter. We are seeing about 30% of what was crossing 2 weeks ago. Mexico has already packed over 50% of their crop, and is lighten their harvest to spread supplies out through the spring. The California crop has started packing light numbers of their new crop. Chile is almost done, and has little fruit left to bring to market.

**Bell Peppers Western** ↓ Current assessments after Mexico's freeze show significant damage on the green bell crop. There is smaller size choice with a wide range in quality, with all showing signs of freeze damage. Supplies look to continue to drop over the next few weeks. Colored bells appear to have come through the freeze the best. The next two weeks we expect to see fair production of fruit already set on the plant. After that, a bloom drop is expected to impact production for up to 6 weeks. **Eastern** ↑ The bell pepper market in Florida is already reacting to Mexico's freeze with pricing jumping up over the last few days. The Florida season is typically winding down this time of year, so the increased demand out of the West will keep the market at high levels and supplies limited for a few weeks.

**Broccoli** ↑ This market continues to get stronger on bunched product as well as crowns. Expect this commodity to get stronger throughout the week with most suppliers. Supplies are expected to be light in Santa Maria and Yuma. Some pin rot, discoloring, and heavy water damage is still being seen sporadically on different arrivals. Mexico production is light to moderate.

**Cauliflower** ↑ The cauliflower market continues to gain strength. All suppliers are cleaned up on excess inventories. Demand is better. Twelve

count sizing continues to be the most readily size available. Santa Maria and Yuma volumes are sufficient to fill contract orders but open business will see an increase in pricing throughout the week. There has not been issues on quality as of yet.

**Celery** ↑ Demand exceeds supply on this commodity. This market is stronger on all sizing. Currently, production is coming from Oxnard, Santa Maria and Yuma. The Oxnard production continues to be significantly reduced due to past cold temperatures and rain. Pith, crack, and bottom rot are the defects most commonly seen upon arrivals. Expect supplies to be light throughout the week.

**Citrus Lemons** ↔ Fruit sizing is shifting to 115's and larger. The 165's and smaller are less abundant. **Oranges** ↔ We are seeing the size in the orange crop starting to size up as well. The percentage of small sizes being packed is starting to drop.

**Lettuce Leaf** ↑ The market on romaine continues to be active. Supplies are light with all suppliers, and demand has increased. Yields are significantly down due to blister, bottom rot and epidermal peel that all suppliers are dealing with. Romaine Hearts are extremely difficult to purchase as harvesting has been extremely light with all suppliers. The freeze has hurt all suppliers and it is reflected in the quality of their romaine. Red leaf is tight. The green leaf has also risen substantially. Look for active

markets throughout the week on all leaf items. **Iceberg** ↑ This market is higher with all suppliers. Demand clearly exceeds supply. Shippers are expected to be out of product at the beginning of the week. Loading will be slow going all week with this commodity. Shippers are still seeing some epidermal peel, bottom rot, as well as blister for product being harvested. The weights and quality will vary amongst the different shippers. Yuma production has weights ranging from 34 to 38 pounds. The sclerotinia issues in Yuma will only make production numbers smaller coupled with all the other issues. Many suppliers are substituting 30 counts for 24 counts due to sizing issues.

**Melons Cantaloupes** ↑ There is good availability and quality of all sizes of offshore fruit loading out of Florida and California. Larger sizes are demanding a slightly higher price but fruit is peaking to large sizes. **Honeydew** ↑ Dews are extremely limited on both coasts this week with very little fruit coming in and mostly peaking to 5ct.

**Onions** ↓ Yellows in Idaho/Oregon and Washington are lower on all sizes due to light demand and Mexican product. Most suppliers will flex on volume orders. The quality of storage yellows has been good in both areas. Mexican yellows are peaking on jumbos and then colossal. The Mexican yellow market is also slightly lower and the quality has been very good. Reds are lower in the northwest and the volume deals remain. Expect the red market to remain weak until the volume in Washington is gone. Red quality has been good. Whites are steady to lower now since the Mexican volume is up. Northwest white supplies are light and a lot of shippers have had variable quality. Mexican reds are supposed to start crossing at the

end of this week. Nevada is still packing whites, yellows, and reds. They are steady to slightly lower on all sizes and colors due to light demand.

**Potatoes** ↑ Idaho temperatures dipped down to the single digits again at the end of last week and tightened up the carton supply. This week is forecast for warmer and most suppliers should be able to haul & pack everyday so the availability will improve as the week goes on. Idaho Burbanks are priced higher on all sizes but especially the larger counts due the lack of size. Norkotah prices are also up but are still lower on the larger counts. Burbanks and Norkotah quality has been mostly good but a few lots of Burbank have had hollow-heart and internal black spotting. Washington Norkotahs are still peaking on 70-90's. The Washington market is steady but strong. Many shippers are running limited pack schedules to make their supplies last. Colorado is also steady but strong on the larger counts. California red, white, and gold potatoes continue from Bakersfield and the availability is good on all colors. Mount Vernon, Washington continues packing excellent quality reds & golds but the gold volume is limited as they approach the end of the season. Washington reds will be available into March. The Washington market is mostly steady. Minnesota & Wisconsin both continue to pack reds and golds and the markets for both are steady but strong as supplies are limited.

**Tomatoes Eastern** ↑ The market has gone through the roof coinciding with the freeze in Mexico. Florida is already in "salvage" mode of operation with diminished supplies and inconsistent quality. Most to all shippers have already enacted "act of god" to most contracts and agreements. We can expect high markets and low supply up through the spring plantings. #1 product is in short supply and most shippers are selling based off "combo" pricing. **Western** ↑ Mexico has been affected by the worst freeze since 1957. Growers really have no experience in dealing with such issues and are assessing daily to keep information flowing. There still is no clear picture as to the extent of damage, but it is not good. We can expect high markets, low supply leading into June.

