



# fresh Directions

February 24th, 2011

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

**Apples** ↔ Washington Red delicious is peaking on premium grade fruit and is producing more of the smaller sizes. Strong demand is keeping the red market strong on all grades. Gold's are still producing mostly 88/100's and have more large fruit than small. They are also still heavier to the Washington extra-fancy grade. Galas are peaking on 100/113's and have good color but large fruit remains tight. Granny-Smiths continue to peak on 88's and larger while 100 size and smaller remain very limited. Most suppliers continue to sub sizes and grades on smaller-count 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 is lower on standard and large sizes but up on extra large and jumbos. Expect smaller sizes to increase in price by the end of the week. Mexican supplies have been lighter on large sizing and likely will continue throughout the week. 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. Supplies are tightening up. 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 field price for the Mexican fruit is rising. 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. The market over all is getting very strong.

**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 is lower on bunched product as well as crowns. Expect this commodity to be ample in supplies throughout the rest of the week with most suppliers. Supplies are in Santa Maria and Yuma. Deals can be made on volume orders of crowns so please be aware. Mexico production has picked up as well.

**Cauliflower** ↑ The cauliflower market is active. Most suppliers have started the week light in supplies and expect this to continue throughout the week. Twelve count sizing continues to be the most readily size available. Santa Maria and Yuma volumes are sufficient to fill contract orders. There has not been issues on quality as of yet.

**Celery** ↓ This market is softer. Deals can be made on all sizing so promote if possible. Currently, production is coming from Oxnard, Santa Maria and Yuma. The Oxnard production has picked up a little compared to last week. Pith, crack, and bottom rot are the defects most commonly seen upon arrivals. Yuma supplies have picked up. Demand has eased up likely due to high pricing.

**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 is firm. Supplies are light with all suppliers, but demand has eased up slightly. 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

market has softened. **Iceberg** ↔ This market is firm with all suppliers. 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 32 to 36 pounds. The sclerotinia issues in Yuma will only make production numbers smaller coupled with all the other issues. Rain was heavy in Yuma over the weekend and production has been slow to start the week. Supplies are light with all suppliers.

**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 again this week with very little fruit coming in and mostly peaking to 5ct.

**Onions** ↓ Yellows in the northwest are lower again on all sizes due to lighter demand and Mexican product. The quality of the storage yellows has been good in both areas. Mexican yellows are peaking on jumbos and then colossals. The Mexican yellow market is steady and the quality has been very good. Reds are steady in the northwest and the volume deals remain. Expect the red market to remain weak until the volume in Washington is gone. The 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 have started to cross. The Mexican White market is down slightly to better supplies. Nevada is still packing whites, a few yellows, and reds. They are steady to slightly lower on all sizes and colors.

**Potatoes** ↑ Idaho temperatures are up but are supposed to drop to single digits again on Thursday so we could see some weekend availability issues. The Burbank market is steady to higher on all sizes but especially the larger counts. Norkotah prices are also steady to higher. Quality has been mostly good but a few lots of Burbanks have had some hollow-heart and internal black spotting. Washington Norkotahs continue to peak on 70-90's. The Washington market is higher on all sizes. Many packers are still running limited schedules to make their supplies last. Colorado is higher on the big 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 the market is steady but availability is light. Florida has started packing a few reds.

**Tomatoes** **Eastern** ↔ The market continues to be high from the past freeze in Florida coinciding with the freeze in Mexico. Florida continues 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** ↓ 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, but are actually seeing lower than expected pricing due to quality and abundance of fruit. The reduction in pricing is due to the majority of the fruit on the plants had ripened rapidly due to the freeze and shippers got loaded up and had to reduce pricing to keep fruit moving. We can expect the lower pricing to be short lived, as we approach the end of next week these shippers will probably be out of fruit again, hence pushing pricing back up.

