



fresh Directions

March 3rd, 2011

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

Apples ↔ Washington Reds are peaking on premium color and are still heavier to the smaller sizes. Strong demand has kept the red market strong on all grades. Many suppliers are rationing their reds out to ensure season-long supply. Gold's are peaking on 88/100's and have there is more larger fruit than smaller, they are also producing more of the Washington extra-fancy Galas continue to peak on 100/113's and have good color. Large Gala's are very limited. Granny-Smiths are peaking on 88's and larger while 100's and smaller are extremely limited. Most shippers are subbing sizes and grades on smaller-count granny 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 firm on all sizing. Mexican supplies have been lighter in availability and this will likely 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 in from Mexico continue at 30% lighter rate than a few weeks ago. Supplies are very tight. Mexico has already packed over 60% of their crop, and has lightened their harvest to spread supplies out through the spring. The field price for the Mexican fruit is rising. The California crop has started packing only light numbers of their new crop. This years California crop is less than

half of last years. Chile is done, and has little fruit left on the market. From now through July, the industry will average only 16 to 17 million pounds in production per week. The average weekly demand runs 24 to 26 million pounds per week. The results of this shortage are and will continue to be a very strong market and much higher prices.

Bell Peppers Western ↔ Green bells out of Mexico will continue with very limited production with the tail end of their crop. Smaller size choice with a wide range in quality, with all showing signs of freeze damage. Supplies will continue to drop over the next couple of weeks. California's Desert crop will start around the first week of April. Colored bells are starting to lighten in production. We expect to see fair production is week and see volumes to really begin to drop next week as we start seeing the effects of the bloom drop form the freeze in early February. **Eastern** ↔ Demand on Florida pepper remains strong due to short supplies in Nogales. Off-grade pepper is tightening up daily which should keep the pepper market at the higher levels for some time. Quality has been good.

Broccoli ↑ This market is higher on bunched product as well as crowns. Very cold weather in the growing regions has stunted the growth of this commodity. Supplies are in Santa Maria and Yuma.

Volume deals are no being offered like in the previous week. Mexico production is moderate in supplies to start the week.

Cauliflower ↑ The cauliflower market continues to be active. Many 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 have been some issues of brown spotting upon arrivals.

Celery ↓ This market is softer. Deals can be made on most 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 is lower and some suppliers are looking to deal.

Citrus Lemons ↔ Fruit sizing is shifting to 115's and larger. The 165's and smaller are less abundant with the market showing some firming. **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 stronger. Supplies are light with all suppliers, and demand has picked up. 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 blister and peel has made this commodity rough in appearance upon arrival. This will continue likely for most of the Yuma deal so please let your customers be advised. Red leaf is tight. The green leaf market has firmed up. **Iceberg** ↑ This market is stronger 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. Rain and cold weather were in Yuma this past week. Supplies are light with all suppliers. Brown ribs, discoloration, blister and peel are a few common defects seen upon arrival. This will continue throughout the week so please be aware.

Melons Cantaloupes ↔ There is good availability sizes are peaking to 9's and larger. Volume is a little more limited but quality is excellent. **Honeydew** ↑ Dews are still extremely limited on both coasts with very little fruit coming in and mostly peaking to 5ct. We will see tighter markets for the next week to 2 weeks and then it should come off a bit.

Onions ↓ Northwest yellows are steady to lower on all sizes. The quality of the storage yellows is holding nicely. Mexican yellows continue to peak on jumbos and colossal and their market is steady to slightly lower. The Mexican yellow quality is very good. Reds are lower in the northwest and the volume deals remain. Mexican reds are steady to slightly lower as well. The red quality has been good in all areas. Northwest whites are steady to lower. Mexican Whites are lower and plentiful with volume deals

available. Nevada is still packing whites, a few yellows, and reds. They are steady to slightly lower on all sizes and colors.

Potatoes ↑ The Burbank market is stronger on all counts and lower still on poly. Expect potatoes to continue to climb due to limited storage supplies and small potatoes. Stay ahead on potatoes if possible! Norkotah carton prices are mostly steady but they are very limited right now because most shippers aren't packing them. Idaho's quality has been mostly good although few lots of Burbanks have some hollow-heart and internal black spotting. Washington Norkotahs continue to peak in the middle of the count range. The Washington market is higher on all sizes except poly. Many Most Idaho & Washington packers continue to pack on limited schedules to make their supplies last throughout the season. Colorado is steady on all sizes but expect their market to continue to climb due to limited supplies and smaller spuds. 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 golds are limited. Washington reds will be available into March. And their market is steady. Minnesota & Wisconsin both continue to pack reds and the market is steady but availability is light. Florida has started packing limited quantities of reds and that market is strong.

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. Growers are getting close to the end of their growing deal in South Florida and are looking at transition to the north. We can expect high markets and low supply up through the spring plantings, but even the spring deal is in question as to how strong it will be. **Western** ↑ We can expect high markets and low supply leading into June, but had seen lower than expected pricing due to poor quality and abundance of fruit, that seems to be cleaned up as shippers are rebounding back up with pricing. The fruit has greatly reduced shelf life due to the fruit coming off stressed or dying plants. Fruit is only holding up for 3-4 days then starts popping. 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.

