



fresh Directions

March 17th, 2011

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

Apples ↔ Washington Red delicious continue to peak on premium colored fruit and are still heavier to the smaller sizes. Strong demand & lower than normal storage supplies have kept red prices up. Many suppliers are still rationing their reds out to ensure a year round supply. Golden delicious are still peaking on 88/100's and larger and they continue to produce more of the Washington extra-fancy grade. Galas are heavier to 100/113's and have good color. Large Gala's remain very limited. Granny-Smiths are also peaking on 88's and larger while 100's and smaller are very short. Most shippers are subbing 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 are also very short.

Asparagus ↔ This market is stable on all sizing. The best availability continues to be in standard and large sizing. Mexican supplies continue to be light on extra large and jumbo sizing. Peruvian product is moderate in availability on standard and large sizes. The jumbo and extra large sizing is on the light side as well. California production has begun in a light way out of the Bakersfield region.

Avocado ↑ Avocado supplies crossing in from Mexico continue at a lighter rate and supplies are very tight. Mexico has already packed over 70% of their crop, and has lightened their harvest to spread supplies out through the spring. The field

price for the Mexican fruit keeps 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. 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. There will be a few small Mexican growers starting their spring crop in early April. California's Desert crop will start around the mid April. Colored bells are starting to lighten in production as some growers are finishing for the season and the effects of the bloom drop caused by the freeze. We expect to see lighter supplies through April. **Eastern** ↔ Demand on Florida pepper remains strong due to short supplies in Nogales. Off-grade pepper is loosening up a bit and the pepper market as a whole should remain steady into next week. Quality is good.

Broccoli ↓ This market is softer on bunched product as well as crowns. This week has started out a little slow in demand. Supplies have picked up with Salinas as well as Santa Maria and Yuma production. Mexico production is

moderate in supplies to start the week. Offers are being made so don't hesitate to ask.

Cauliflower ↓ The cauliflower market is softer as supplies continue to be good in Yuma, Salinas, and Santa Maria. Twelve counts continue to be the best in availability. A few shippers are looking to move large volume orders as supplies have picked up and demand has slowed down.

Celery ↑ This market is stronger. Suppliers have become a little tighter on all sizing. Demand is lighter to start the week. Currently, production is coming from Oxnard, Santa Maria and Yuma. The Oxnard production is stronger as is the Yuma production. . The quality continues to get stronger in all the growing regions.

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 romaine market continues to be an unusual story. Currently there is a five dollar gap in pricing on romaine. Some suppliers continue filling contract orders but have little to sell on the open market. This is due to lower yields. This being said, there are some offers available for large orders. Yields continue to be 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 has loosened up as well as green leaf. **Iceberg** ↓ This market is softer. Demand has fallen off, mainly due to high pricing over these past weeks. 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. Brown ribs, discoloration, blister and peel are a few common defects seen upon arrival.

Melons Cantaloupes ↔

Cantaloupe is still limited. Cantaloupe 9's and 12's are available in a light way with 15's and smaller only available for contract business and not enough there to cover. 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. Small fruit is limited at best. Quality is only fair.

Onions ↓ Storage yellows in the northwest continue mostly steady on all sizes. Most shippers have jumbos and larger while mediums remain limited. Quality on the storage yellows has been very nice. Mexican yellows are still peaking on jumbos and colossals. The Mexican yellow market is also steady. The quality from Mexico also has very good. The Mexican yellows are also lacking mediums. Texas continues to pack a few yellows. Reds are steady in the northwest and the volume deals are still available in all areas. Mexican reds are steady. The red quality has been good on the storage reds and new crop as well. Northwest

whites are steady but supplies remain limited. Mexican Whites are steady but plentiful with volume deals available on jumbos. Nevada still has all colors available and they are steady on everything except medium yellows, which are limited.

Potatoes ↑ Idaho is steady on all counts & number-tuos and is down slightly on poly and mesh bags. 70's and larger are still the most limited counts. Norkotah carton prices are up from last week but very limited since most shippers aren't packing them. Idaho's quality is mostly good although some lots of Burbanks have had hollow-heart and internal black spotting. Washington Norkotahs continue to vary widely in size. The Washington market is steady on all packs. Most Idaho & Washington shippers are packing on a limited basis to stretch their storage supplies. Colorado is also steady on all sizes and they have had more large counts this week. Colored potatoes continue from Bakersfield and the availability is good on reds, limited on golds, and even more limited on whites. Mount Vernon, Washington continues packing excellent quality reds but has finished with golds. Washington reds will be available for the next couple weeks and their market is steady. Minnesota & Wisconsin both continue to pack reds and the market is steady but availability is light as they are nearly done. Florida continues packing limited supplies of all colors and is producing more reds than any other color.

Tomatoes Eastern ↑ The market continues to be high from the past freeze in Florida coinciding with the freeze in Mexico. Mostly US Combinations or #2 product is being shipped out of Florida. The end of this week should see the very beginnings of new crop out of Florida but supplies will be very light and coming only from a limited number of shippers. We can expect high markets, poor quality and low supplies for another 2-3 weeks. At this point, even the spring deal is in question as to how strong it will be. **Western** ↑ We can expect high markets and poor quality crossing from Mexico for the next 2-3 weeks. Most of 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. With the "salvage" product from the freeze about finished, there will be more dramatic price increases – maybe not yet this week, but certainly by the tail end of next week.

