



fresh Directions

March 24th, 2011

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

Apples ↔ Washington Reds are still peaking on smaller fruit and premium color. Strong demand & lower than normal storage numbers are keeping red prices up. Many suppliers are still rationing their fruit out to ensure a year round supply. Golden delicious are still peaking on 88/100's and larger and they are heavier to the Washington extra-fancy grade. Galas are peaking on 100/113's and have good color. Large Gala's remain very short! Granny-Smiths are also 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 very tight.

Asparagus ↓ This market is softer on all sizing. The best availability is coming on extra large and jumbos. Mexican supplies are better and California production is getting stronger out of the Bakersfield region. Peruvian product is moderate in availability on standard and large sizes. The jumbo and extra large sizing is on the light side as well.

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 have increased production even though they are into 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 supplies to lighten through April. **Eastern** ↓ The pepper market has loosened up considerably as supplies and quality improve. As Florida begins to transition northward in the coming weeks, the market should stay steady. Excellent weather throughout all the growing regions means continued good quality.

Broccoli ↑ This market is stronger on bunched product as well as crowns. This week started out a little slow, but demand has increased. Supplies are lighter in Salinas due to heavy rains throughout the valley. Current production is coming

out of Yuma, Santa Maria, and Salinas. Mexico production continues to be moderate in supplies to start the week.

Cauliflower ↑ The cauliflower market is stronger with all suppliers. Supplies are expected to be lighter towards the end of the week, pending demand. Production is occurring in Yuma, Salinas, and Santa Maria. Twelve counts continue to be the best in availability. There have been some reports of brown spotting upon arrivals. Expect this market to be very active throughout this week and next.

Celery ↔ This market is firm. Suppliers have become a little tighter on all sizing, especially 30s and smaller. Currently, production is coming from Oxnard, Santa Maria and Yuma. The Oxnard production is moderate as is the Yuma production. The quality continues to get stronger in all the growing regions. Supplies look to be light on small sizing and moderate on large sizes for the rest of the week.

Citrus Lemons ↑ Rain continues to be the story as it has become virtually impossible to pick fruit under current conditions. Sizing is an issue with some shippers as the sheds are running low on pre rain harvest fruit. Demand remains light to moderate with the markets relatively unchanged. **Oranges** ↔ We are seeing the size in the orange crop peaking with the 88/ 113's. The quality continues to be very good with a large ratio of fancy to choice among the shippers.

Supplies of oranges are also sporadic in the short term due to the continued rains in the growing regions.

Lettuce Leaf ↓ The romaine market is softer. Many suppliers are looking to move on this commodity and deals are being offered for volume orders. Yields are better and demand is off. Blister and epidermal peel is still an issue but not nearly the problem as in past weeks. Romaine Hearts have better availability and the market has come down dramatically on this commodity. Green and red leaf has come off as well. Huron has begun production and supplies look to increase next week. **Iceberg** ↓ This market is softer. Supplies are stronger out of Yuma, and Huron has begun production. Demand is light. The quality has picked up considerably compared to past weeks. The weights and quality will vary amongst the different shippers. Yuma production has weights ranging from 36 to 42 pounds. Discoloration, and some blister have been seen upon arrivals, however the frequency is much less, in comparison to past weeks.

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 ↔ Northwest storage yellows are mostly steady on all sizes and mediums are still short while jumbos and larger are available. The larger Idaho/Oregon/Washington packers will continue shipping into mid or late April while the smaller ones are finishing now. Quality on

the storage yellows has been good. Texas/Mexico yellows are still peaking on jumbos and colossals although a few shippers are heavier to mediums this week. The quality from Texas/Mexico has also been good. Reds are steady in the northwest and the volume deals are still available in Washington. Texas/Mexico reds are steady. The quality on reds has been good on in both the storage product and new crop. Northwest whites are steady but supplies are very limited. Mexican Whites are steady but plentiful with volume deals available on jumbos. Nevada still has all colors available and they are steady on all sizes & colors.

Potatoes ↔ Idaho remains steady on all sizes and packs. 70 count and larger are still the most limited in the count sizes. Norkotah carton prices are up again and they are still very limited since most shippers only pack those one to two days per week. Idaho's quality is mostly good although some lots have had hollow-heart and internal black spotting. Washington Norkotahs continue to vary widely in size. The Washington market is steady on all packs and sizes as well. Colorado is steady on all sizes as well. Bakersfield, California is still shipping colored potatoes and the availability is light on reds, limited on golds, and even more limited on whites. The California desert is harvesting newcrop reds and whites now. Mount Vernon, Washington continues packing excellent quality reds. Washington reds will be available for the next couple weeks and their market is steady. Minnesota & Wisconsin both continue to pack a few reds and the market is steady but availability is light. Florida continues

packing limited supplies of all colors and is producing more reds than any other color, but production will increase by the end of the week.

Tomatoes Eastern ↑ The market continues to be high from the past freeze in Florida coinciding with the freeze in Mexico. While the quality is considerably better than the Mexican fruit, it is not close to the quality we come to expect from the Florida product. Weather, however, has been very cooperative and we should start to see improvement in the quality and supplies as well over the next few weeks. This deal will ramp up come first of April and reach its peak around the middle of April. Look for a steady market on rounds for the next couple of weeks and then it should begin to drop off.

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. Eastern fruit will now be the focus of the tomato world, as Nogales product has become barely shippable.

