



fresh Directions

March 31st, 2011

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

Apples ↔ Washington Red delicious are still heavy to higher colored fruit and are peaking on the smaller sizes. Strong demand, lower than desirable storage numbers, short-crops in New York and Michigan are keeping red prices up. Many suppliers are still rationing their reds to ensure a year round supply. Golden delicious continue to peak on 100's and larger and are heavier to the Washington extra-fancy grade. Galas are producing mostly 100/113's and have good color. Large Gala's remain very short! Granny-Smiths are peaking on 88's and larger while 100's and smaller are extremely limited. Most packers continue to sub 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 steady on all sizing. There are good supplies on all sizes except jumbos where these supplies are moderate. 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.

Avocado ↔ Avocado supplies crossing in from Mexico continue at a lighter, but steady rate. Mexico has already packed over 75% of their crop, and continues to lighten their harvest to spread supplies out through the spring.

The California growers are packing better volume, but still less than normal due to the light crop this year. 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 limited supplies through mid April. This will include few small Mexican growers starting their spring crop in early April. California's Desert crop will start around the mid April. Colored bells are lighting 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 to start the week. Demand is definitely up. 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 light throughout the week and pricing will be active. 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 continues to be 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. Expect small sizing to be light to moderate throughout the week.

Citrus **Lemons** ↑ Demand is increasing and supplies of 165's and smaller are decreasing. Rains of last week kept harvest to a minimum. **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.

Lettuce **Leaf** ↔ The romaine market is stable. 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 is stable. Huron has begun production and supplies look to increase next week. Supplies on all leaf items will be available in Yuma as well. **Iceberg** ↔ This market is steady. Supplies in Yuma are moderate, and Huron is getting much better production numbers. 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 of these defects are 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 steady to lower on all sizes. The larger Idaho/Oregon & Washington shippers will continue packing 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 but a few have better numbers of mediums so that market has come off. Texas and Mexico are both harvesting heavier this week so the larger sizes are also lower. The quality from Texas & Mexico has 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 and new crop onions. Northwest whites are steady to lower but supplies are very limited. Mexican Whites are steady but plentiful with volume deals available. Nevada still has all yellows and reds and they are steady on both.

Potatoes ↔ Smaller spuds are still the bulk of Idaho's production. The market remains mostly steady on all sizes and packs. 70 count and larger are still the tightest of the carton counts. Norkotah are still very limited since most shippers only pack them one to two days per week, in fact most of our suppliers aren't quoting them. 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 to slightly higher on all packs and sizes. Colorado is steady on all sizes as well. Bakersfield, California is still shipping colored potatoes and but availability is light on reds and golds, and even lighter on whites. The California desert is harvesting new-crop reds and whites now so expect better availability by the end of the week. Mount Vernon, Washington continues packing a few reds. Minnesota & Wisconsin both continue to pack a few reds and the market is steady but availability is light. Florida production is increasing as they continue packing all colors but they are producing more reds than any other color. Whites and golds are available but limited.

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 and Romas for another week or so before it begins to fall off and a steadily declining market on grapes and cherries. **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.

