



Fresh Directions

April 7th, 2011

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

Apples ↔ Red delicious in Washington is heavy to higher colored fruit and is still peaking on the smaller sizes. Lower than desirable storage numbers and short-crops in both New York and Michigan have kept the red prices up. Many suppliers continue to ration their reds to ensure a year round supply. Golden's are still peaking on 100's and larger and remain heavy to the Washington extra-fancy grade. Galas are producing mostly 100/113's and have good color but supplies are getting short. Large Gala's remain very extremely short! The smaller Gala shipper will finish fairly soon so expect a much stronger market in late April. Granny's are still producing mostly 88's and larger. Most packers continue to sub sizes and grades on Granny orders of the smaller sizes. Fuji's are still high in color and continue to peak on 88's and larger. Small Fuji's remain very tight and will get tighter as the Gala supplies drop.

Asparagus ↑ This market is stronger on most sizing. Supplies are lighter out of Mexico and domestic product is light to moderate in availability. Supplies are better on jumbo sizing for those needing this size. 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 mid April. Colored bells are has drop in production due poor quality and growers finishing for the season and others beginning to finish. Supplies will be very short for 3 weeks. Baja will start in 2 to 3 week with limited supplies. The California desert starts mid May to the end of May. **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 firm on bunched product as well as crowns to start the week. Demand is a little

stronger. Supplies are light to moderate in Salinas. Current production is coming out of Santa Maria and Salinas. Mexico production continues to be moderate in supplies.

Cauliflower ↓ The cauliflower market is softer. Supplies have picked up in Santa Maria and Salinas. Twelve counts continue to be the best in availability. There have been some reports of brown spotting upon arrivals coming out of all the growing regions. Yuma has finished production.

Celery ↔ This market is firm. Suppliers are lighter on small sizing, and this has caused a gap in pricing by a few dollars. Current production is coming from Oxnard and Santa Maria. The Oxnard production is getting stronger, while in Santa Maria is only moderate. There has been few to none on quality issues out of both regions. Expect small sizing to be light to moderate throughout the week. Special load volume pricing on 24s can be had so please be aware.

Citrus Lemons ↑ Demand is increasing with the supplies of 165's and smaller is decreasing. Small choice fruit is very tight.

Oranges ↔ We are seeing the size in the orange crop peaking with the 88/ 113's. The quality continues to be very good with peak sizes running to 88's and 113's.

Lettuce Leaf ↔ The romaine market is stable. Blister and epidermal peel is still an issue but not nearly the problem as in past weeks. Production numbers are better in Huron, and light in Salinas. Yuma production

is just about finished. Green and red leaf is stable. **Iceberg** ↔ This market is steady. Supplies in Yuma are light, but Huron is getting much stronger. Demand continues to be light. There have been issues with discoloration, ribbing and decay seen sporadically upon arrivals. Huron weights have been averaging 38-42 pounds. Discounted pricing is being offered on load volume orders.

Melons **Cantaloupes** ↓ Cantaloupe is coming in with better volume. Quality is still excellent with most shippers but there is some older fruit out there which is bringing the market down. **Honeydew** ↓ Dews are coming in with much better volume. Quality is good and the market is continuing to adjust down.

Onions ↓ Storage yellows are steady to lower on all sizes due to light demand and ample supplies. Deals are available on all sizes in both Washington & Idaho. The larger packers will be shipping from the northwest between mid April to mid May. The yellow storage quality has been holding well. The Texas & Mexican crops are heavy to jumbos and colossals. Mexican inventories are up this week so expect the volume deals through this week at least. The quality from both areas has been good. Reds are steady to lower in the northwest and the volume deals remain. Texas/Mexico reds are also steady to lower. The red quality has been good on in both the storage and new crop onions. Northwest whites are steady to lower but are extremely limited. Mexican Whites are steady to lower with volume deals available on jumbos. Nevada still has a few yellows and reds. The California desert will begin their yellow harvest in two to three weeks.

Potatoes ↔ Idaho to peak on 90 count and smaller cartons. The market remains mostly steady on all sizes and packs although there are some deals this week due to lighter demand. 70 count & larger are still more limited than the smaller counts. Norkotahs remain very short since most shippers are only packing them one to two days a week if at all. Idaho's quality is still mostly good but some lots have shown hollowheart and internal black spotting. Washington Norkotahs are still all over the size spectrum. The Washington market is steady on all sizes. Colorado is steady on all sizes. The Colorado spuds are heavier to 70's and smaller now. Bakersfield is still shipping colored potatoes but availability is light on all colors. The California desert is still harvesting new-crop reds and whites. Mount Vernon, Washington continues packing a few reds but they are cleaning up. 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. Reds are still the bulk of Florida's production. Whites and golds are more available but still relatively limited. The Florida prices are slowly dropping as the supplies increase on all colors.

Tomatoes **Eastern** ↓ The market has begun to dip on rounds but Romas remain non-existent. While the quality on the Florida product 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 should reach its peak mid to late April. Look for a steadily declining market on rounds but a rising market on Romas. Grapes and cherries remain steady. **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.

