



fresh Directions

August 25th, 2011

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

Apples ↔ Red Delicious is still mostly small fruit with high color and the lower grades remain limited. The fancy grade is virtually non-existent but there are a few Washington-Extra numbers two s. Expect lower grade fruit to remain very short for the rest of the storage crop. Reds are so short that some suppliers may gap. Golden Delicious is still heavy to larger fruit and the Washington extra-fancy grade. Stay ahead on the lower grades and the smaller sizes due to light supplies and expect the market to continue climbing. California has started packing Galas and they are peaking on 88 through 113 s. There is some smaller fruit but most is going into consumer bags so expect the smaller counts to remain limited. Granny-Smiths are still heavy to larger fruit and very limited on 100 s and smaller. Stay ahead on Grannies as that market is also rising due to light supplies in Washington. Some Washington suppliers may gap on Granny s as well. California won't start packing Granny-Smiths in volume for at least two weeks. Most packers will sub larger sizes and higher grades on orders of the smaller sizes.

Asparagus ↑ This market continues to be active on all sizes. Supplies out of Mexico continue to be light. Standard sizing is the best size available, but this size continues to get more expensive daily. Peruvian product will be light throughout this week. Place orders on this commodity early all this week as supplies will be on the lighter side.

Avocado ↔ August looks to be the most volatile and confusing month of this avocado season. California harvest is winding down and is 80% shipped. Volume has dropped significantly, and we look to be about done with California fruit by the end of the month. Mexico is beginning to increase just a bit this week and slowly increase over the next couple of weeks. We will begin to see some increasing supplies from Chile in the next 2 to 3 weeks, as well as light supplies of fruit from Peru that will enter the market next week with limited numbers.

Bell Peppers Western ↔ The California crop on green bells is producing good volume. Colored bell supplies are starting to lighten in production this week as older field finish and new fields look to begin in 7 to 10 days. **Eastern** ↔ Pepper has now come on with good volume in Michigan, and the markets have dropped. Quality is good and most sizes available with the exception of medium pepper, which remains tight. Some sun tan pepper starting to appear.

Broccoli ↔ This market is firm to start the week on bunched product as well as crowns. Salinas and Santa Maria are the two main growing regions for this commodity. Some suppliers are better off than others so the pricing is sporadic. The back to school promotions should start to make the market more active later in the week. There have been no issues in terms of poor quality to report at this time.

Cauliflower ↔ This market continues to be steady. Supplies continue to be heaviest to the twelve counts. Some suppliers have offered sharper pricing on volume orders to begin the week so availability is good. The overall quality of this commodity is reported to be strong in terms of color and texture. Production continues to be out of Santa Maria and Salinas.

Celery ↔ This market is steady like the previous week. Suppliers are offering deals on large sizing, mainly 24s. Small sizing continues to be lighter in availability and is commanding a higher price. Santa Maria and Salinas continue to be the main growing regions for this commodity.

Citrus Lemons ↔ The lemon market continues to strengthen with good demand that is typical for this time of year. 140s and larger sizes are becoming tight. **Oranges** ↑ Valencia orange supplies are shorting up on 88s and smaller as demand is exceeding supplies for small fruit with the increased demand with schools beginning.

Lettuce Leaf ↔ This market has not changed from the previous week. The romaine market continues to be steady to start the week. Supplies are good and shippers are offering volume discounting. The market continues to be steady on green and red leaf as well. Shippers were expecting better movement to begin the week but a lack of demand has kept this market flat overall. **Iceberg** ↔ This market is steady, but is expected to get stronger by mid-

week. Weights continue to average 42 to 50 pounds on lettuce, depending on the shipper. The weights throughout the week are expected to be strong. A few suppliers have started the week looking to move load volume so deals can be had early this week. Santa Maria and Salinas are the main growing areas at this time.

Melons **Cantaloupes** ↔ Volume has increased and there's good quality out there but some sub standard as well. Prices are reflecting quality and age of the fruit. Good quality product remains steady. Demand remains light. **Honeydew** ↔ Honeydew continues to be a little more limited and peaking to 5s and larger. Quality is still excellent and demand is light.

Onions ↔ California yellows continue to be steady on all sizes. Some suppliers have larger onions and others have smaller size but all sizes are available. Most suppliers will still deal on volume orders. New Mexico is also steady on all size yellows and will also deal for volume. Several New Mexico shippers have finished so expect their availability to drop slightly. Colorado and Washington yellows are steady and heavy to the jumbo size. California red supplies are dropping but the market is stable. Most New Mexico shippers continue to buy reds from California and their market is up slightly. Colorado and Washington both have reds but mixer volume only. White supplies are dropping in both California and New Mexico but the market is stable. Colorado has a few whites and Washington will have them at the end of this week. Stay ahead on whites and reds until Idaho/Oregon starts packing in early to mid September. Quality in both California and New Mexico has ranged from fair to excellent on all colors. Colorado and Washington quality has been good.

Potatoes ↔ The Idaho carton market is down to New Crop only. Prices are steady but firm on the larger counts and slightly lower on the smaller norkotahs. Norkotahs are running small so 70- count and larger are limited. New-crop Washington Norkotahs are still peaking on 80/90 count but some lots have larger size. Colorado is done with old crop norkotahs. Kansas & Nebraska continue packing new-crop Norkotahs. The new-crop Norkotahs are still all over the size spectrum but mostly small although some suppliers have larger counts. Stockton, California continues to pack colored potatoes of all colors and the market is steady to lower. California availability is good except in larger reds and golds. Washington & Minnesota both continue packing reds and golds but supplies are fairly limited. Both areas have good numbers of As and Bs while premiums remain limited.

Tomatoes **Eastern** ↔ With hit-and-miss tomato supplies coming out of the Eastern Shore of Virginia/Maryland, the thrust of the Eastern deal resides in the mountain deals of North Carolina/Tennessee and the districts of Benton Harbor, Michigan and Oak Harbor, Ohio. Depending on weather—always a factor in the late summer—we can expect harvests to gain momentum for the next 2-3 weeks and try to control most of the Eastern distribution centers. Prices are stable and could rise a bit over that timeframe.

Western ↔ In the San Joaquin Valley of Central California, mature green tomatoes shippers had planned for light harvests during this timeframe to offset consumers pulling homegrown tomatoes

out of their backyards, and finally that is having an effect on the FOB market. While extra-large sizes are still relatively plentiful, large and medium sizes have tightened up quite a bit and many sheds are currently sold out for the week. This fact in conjunction with schools coming back into session—which helps foodservice business—could strengthen those markets considerably; forcing a continued inverted pricing structure of extra-large trading for less than the smaller sizes.

