



# fresh Directions

February 9, 2012

*An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.*

↔ Eastern markets are steady due to lighter demand but many shippers will try to push prices up this month to cover storage costs. Washington Reds are still mostly in the 88 & 100 size range with higher color. Lower grade reds remain fairly limited. Golden Delicious is also peaking in the 88 & 100 size-range and the higher grades. Lower grade golden have been limited this season. Granny-Smith is predominantly in the 88 & 100 count range as well and is also heavy to the higher grades. Galas are still producing mostly 88's and smaller and heavier to the extra-fancy grades. Gala demand remains strong. Washington Honey Crisp is peaking on 88/100's but the availability is low. Most shippers will finish packing Honey-crisps relatively soon. Cameos, Pink Lady's, Jonagolds, Fuji's, Braeburns and the other varieties are all still available.

↔ **Asparagus** This market is steady to start the week. Supplies out of Mexico are very good on small, standard, and large sizing. Offers are being made. Peruvian product continues to have extra large and jumbos available if needed. The Peruvian product loads in Florida and LA.

↔ **Avocado** Mexican harvest volume is declining as the major pull for the Super Bowl is completed. Volume will adjust to steady demand. New crop California fruit harvest has begun with light numbers. Chile's volume is steady. Expect steady markets going forward.

## **Bell Peppers** Western ↔

Markets very unsettled. Bell pepper (green) production is improving. Supplies more than adequate on smaller/choice fruit with lighter supplies on big fruit. Colored bell pricing are definitely on an upwards trend as demand picks up supplies getting lighter, expecting slight interruption on harvesting due to anticipated rain, markets are very active. ↔ **Eastern** Florida Bell Pepper prices remain steady. No fluctuations are expected for the remainder of the week. Demand is up slightly and quality is good.

↔ **Broccoli** Supplies continue to be strong on bunched product as well as crowns, and suppliers are looking to move volume at discounted pricing. Ideal weather in the growing regions has increased supplies. Availability will be strong throughout the week. There continues to be supplies available in Scottsdale as well.

↔ **Cauliflower** This market is steady to start the week. Due to a lack of demand, suppliers have backed up their inventories and are looking to move volume. Growers are continuing to deal with some sporadic brown spotting. The overall quality has picked up compared to the previous week.

↔ **Celery** This market continues to be steady. All sizes are available and in good supplies. Santa Maria as well as

Oxnard and Yuma are the main areas of production on this commodity. The quality is good with no major issues to report at this time. The variance in pricing has become less with all suppliers. Pricing is competitive.

↓ **Citrus Lemons** Desert crop is about done; their season is projected to end mid February. Central Valley crop is harvesting and the Ventura crop harvest is slow as growers are letting fruit gain size. **Oranges**

↔ The Navels are in full production and supplies are good. Quality looks very nice and fruit is now full natural color. Pack outs are running heavy to fancy grades.

↔ **Lettuce Leaf** The romaine market continues on a steady course. Blister and peel continues to exist but the severity is not as great compared to past weeks. Demand continues to be light. The market is steady as well on green leaf and red leaf. The main growing area is in Yuma. The Thermal area has picked up in production numbers. Supplies out of Santa Maria are light in availability. ↔ **Iceberg** The lettuce market is steady. Supplies are good with most suppliers. Epidermal peel and blister continues to be seen upon arrivals, but the frequency is less. Lettuce carton weights are averaging 44-48 #s, with some suppliers hitting 50 #s. The availability is good and demand is light. Shippers are listening to offers so promote this commodity.

↓ **Melons Cantaloupes** Demand continues to exceed supplies. Offshore fruit is extremely limited. With fewer vessels coming

in they are still selling out the week prior to arrival. Product will continue to be limited at the very least through next week. Quality is very good and the market is steady.

**Honeydew** ↔ Demand exceeds supplies. Offshore fruit is more limited on dews than Cantaloupe. Mexican fruit is still extremely limited also. Very good quality and mostly 6's available for what little fruit is out there. Quality is good. Fruit continues to sell out before it comes into port or crosses the border.

**Onions** ↓ Northwest yellows and reds are steady to lower with good supplies available. Demand has been light. Mexican sweets and sack medium & jumbo yellows are steady and their demand has also been light. Yellow quality has been excellent in the northwest and fair to good in Texas. White supplies are fairly limited in the northwest but remain steady along with the market. Mexico has crossed a few whites but no substantial quantities yet.

**Potatoes** ↔ The Idaho market is essentially unchanged on both varieties and all sizes. Norkotahs are still limited since more packers are running Burbanks. The norkotah size range is still 70's through 100's while Burbanks are still peaking on 80's and then 70's. The Potato lover's month promotion is going in Idaho and typically causes carton inventories to build since it's a retail promo. but it hasn't had much effect yet. Washington potatoes are steady on all sizes. They continue to peak on 60/70's. Colorado is also steady and they are peaking on 40-70's. The russet quality has been excellent in all growing areas. Bakersfield, California is still packing reds, golds, and whites and

pricing is steady. The availability is good on all colors. Washington & North Dakota continue packing reds and golds and both areas are heavier to A-size. Gold supplies are limited in both areas though as we approach the end of the storage season. Wisconsin is also packing reds, whites, and golds and their market is also flat. Whites and golds are limited in Wisconsin as well. Idaho is still packing reds and golds and they are also peaking on A-size. Quality has been fair to excellent Idaho. Florida will start packing reds in a light way in February.

**Tomatoes Eastern** ↔ Since there is not a Government-mandated floor price for tomatoes in Florida, a good number of tomato wholesalers east of the Mississippi River have continued to take Florida product when in normal years they would have already switched to Mexico. But prices are at a 2-year low, and it is only a matter of time before Florida stops picking & packing at a loss, on-hand supplies dry up and the market reacts.

**Western** ↔ With so many tomatoes having been planted in the Mexican interior for the winter 2012 season, it was only a matter of time before there would be a glut of product, and we have seen that situation manifest itself over the last 2-3 weeks. Compounding the situation has been sluggish post-holiday movement of tomatoes, even with warmer weather over most of the country. But as soon as Eastern supplies dwindle a bit more, we could have prices bounce a little off the floor prices set by the U.S. Department of Commerce Suspension Agreement.

