



fresh Directions

March 1, 2012

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

Apples ↔ New York & Michigan apples are mostly steady to slightly higher on most varieties but there are some bargain clean-up offerings out there. Michigan is still predominantly Red Delicious. Supplies in both areas are getting tighter. Washington Red delicious are still heavy to 88/100's with higher color. Supplies of lower grade reds are up as the overall demand is down. Golden Delicious are also heavy to 88/100's and the higher grades. Lower grade Goldens are limited but inventories are up right now due to the lighter demand. Granny-Smiths are also heavier to the higher grades and the 88/100 sizes. Galas are still producing mostly 88s and smaller and the higher grades. Gala demand remains strong. Cameos, Pink Ladys, Jonagolds, Fujis, Braeburns and a few other varieties are all still available but the varietal markets are getting stronger.

Asparagus ↔ This market is steady. Expect things to be steady throughout the week. Supplies out of Mexico continue to be strong on small, standard, and large sizing. Jumbo sizing is available as well. Currently, the standard sizing is the lightest in availability. Peruvian product is also available. This product can be loaded in LA or Florida if desired. There is some domestic grass available. This must load in Gonzales however, which is just outside Salinas.

Avocado ↑ Mexican supplies are beginning to catch up after no harvest due to heavy rains in Mexico on the smaller sizes. Size 48's remain very tight as growers are in clean up acreage that is yielding heavy to the small sizes. To compound this, a major national retailer has switched their spec to a 48. Demand is very good and the supply line remains light. California fruit harvest continues at a limited pace. Chile's volume is steady, but is on the decline as Chile's season comes to an end. Markets on 48's are very firm with limited availability.

Bell Peppers Western ↔ Bell market unsettled as movement is better and market is definitely on an upward trend as some growers crops are sizing down and producing less big fruit. Market on green bell pepper is unsettled. Bell pepper (green) good supplies most availability is on medium, smalls, and choice. Production is light on big fruit. Colored bell pricing is unsettled. La Rouge variety colored bells are demand exceed. Hot house colored bells are experiencing better movement. Gold bells are especially light and will continue until spring crop come online. **Eastern** ↔ The Florida pepper market remains unchanged. Supplies and quality are good with the larger sized pepper in greater volume.

Broccoli ↔ Production is good on this commodity. Good weather in the growing regions has made production

numbers very good on bunched product as well as crowns. Availability is expected to be good throughout the week. There continues to be supplies available in Scottsdale as well. Shippers are willing to deal for load volume orders, so promote as much as possible. Salinas has production as well.

Cauliflower ↔ This market is firm. Suppliers are light to moderate with most suppliers. Pricing is forecasted to get stronger by the end of the week. Overall demand is up. There is some early production for this commodity in Salinas if desired. The quality is fair with sporadic brown spotting being reported.

Celery ↔ This market overall is steady with most suppliers. Small sizing is still the tightest in availability. 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. Pricing is sharp on 24 and 30 count so promote as much as possible.

Citrus Lemons ↔ Desert crop is done. 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 are still moderate issues that exist

with this commodity. Demand is light. The market is steady as well on green leaf and red leaf, with light demand as well. 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 flat. Supplies are good with most suppliers. Epidermal peel and blister continues to be seen upon arrivals sporadically. Lettuce carton weights are averaging 44-48 #s. This market was expected to get stronger at the end of last week, but things did not materialize. This market should stay steady throughout the week.

Melons **Cantaloupes** ↓ Demand continues to exceed supplies. Product is peaking to 9s so there is good availability of large fruit. There are large ads on 12s out there limiting that market and very few 15s and smaller coming in product is still selling out the week prior to arrival. Product will continue to be limited for the next couple of weeks. Quality is very good and the market is steady. **Honeydew** ↓ Demand exceeds supplies. Offshore fruit is still more limited on dews than on Cantaloupes. Fruit continues to sell out before it comes into port. Sizing is running large. Mexican fruit has better availability. Quality is good.

Onions ↓ Storage red and yellow onions are steady on all sizes. Supplies are good and the demand has only been fair. Most shippers will still discount for larger volume orders. Mexico is steady on yellows and they have reds this week. The yellow quality has been excellent in the northwest and fair to good in Texas. The red quality has been good in the northwest. The white onion market remains very strong due to light domestic supplies and very little crossing from Mexico. Much of the

Mexican product is being kept in Mexico. Most northwest white suppliers are pricing day of shipment.

Potatoes ↔ The Idaho carton market is slightly higher again due mostly to processor demand. Several sheds are still not packing because they are out of potatoes. Consumer bags and number twos are steady. Norkotahs are still more limited than Burbanks and will get tighter since many shippers are already finished with them. Washington potatoes are steady to slightly higher on all sizes and they continue to peak on the larger counts. Colorado is steady on all counts and they continue to produce mostly 40- 70s. Russet quality has been excellent in all areas. Bakersfield, California is still packing all colors and pricing is steady on reds and whites. The availability of reds and whites is good but golds are limited. 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 seasons. Wisconsin is also packing reds, whites, and golds and their market is also flat but supplies are getting tighter. Idaho is still packing reds and golds and they continue to peak on A-size. Quality has been fair to excellent Idaho. Florida continues packing all colors and they are heavier to b-size.

Tomatoes **Eastern** ↔ This is probably the lightest week supply-wise out of Florida since they began production last November, and rising prices have reflected that. It is possible; however, the warm to very warm weather in south Florida will bring on the early spring crop

in the Immokalee/Naples area a little earlier than had originally been expected. Reports have overall statewide volume on the increase by the week of March 12. **Western** ↔ This week the market has jumped on all tomato sizes as the Eastern skip in production as pushed quite a bit more business out west. And recent hot weather in Mexico's interior is forcing more heavy color tomatoes to stay within Mexico's border. Look for this price trend to continue for at least the next 7-10 days, if not longer.

