



# fresh Directions

March 8th, 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 is still heavy to 88/100's with higher color. Supplies of lower grade reds are up as the overall demand is down. Golden Delicious is also heavy to 88/100's and the higher grades. Lower grade Golden's 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 88's and smaller and the higher grades. Gala demand remains strong. Cameos, Pink Lady's, Jonagolds, Fuji's, Braeburns and a few other varieties are all still available but the varietal markets are getting stronger.

**Asparagus** ↑ This market is stronger. Supplies out of Mexico continue to show availability in small, standard, and large sizing. Jumbo sizing is available as well. The temperatures in the Mexican growing regions were in the 90's this past weekend. 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. Market on 48's is very firm, and limited availability.

**Bell Peppers Western** ↔ Green bell market unsettled as movement is better and market is definitely on an upward trend as some grower's crops are sizing down and producing less big fruit. Transition to new districts in process but production on those districts will be in the latter part of this week and will be heavier to large fruit and choice. Colored bell pricing is unsettled. La Rouge variety colored bells are demand exceed. Hot house colored bells are experiencing better movement and availability. Gold bells higher markets lighter supplies and will continue until other districts come online.

**Eastern** ↔ Florida pepper prices are creeping as pepper prices out west have jumped. With demand staying strong this market should remain active through the week.

**Broccoli** ↔ Good weather in the growing regions has made production numbers very good on bunched product. The market is steady. Crowns are lighter in supplies but all orders will be filled without a problem. There continues to be supplies available in Scottsdale as well. Salinas has production if it is needed.

**Cauliflower** ↑ This market is active with all suppliers. Expect pricing to slowly go up throughout the week. Suppliers are light on all sizes. Overall demand is up. There is some early production for this commodity in Salinas if desired. The quality continues to be fair in all growing regions, with complaints of yellowing, and black and brown spotting being reported upon arrivals.

**Celery** ↔ This market continues to be steady. 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 continues to be sharp on 24 and 30 count. Smaller sizing is commanding a higher price.

**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. Size curve is swinging to peak sizing on 72's, 88's. Quality looks very nice and fruit is now full natural color. Pack outs are running heavy to fancy grades.

**Lettuce Leaf** ↔ The romaine market is steady. 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 steady. Supplies are strong with most suppliers. Epidermal peel and blister continues to be seen upon arrivals sporadically. Lettuce carton weights are averaging 44-48 #s. This market should stay steady throughout the week.

**Melons Cantaloupes** ↔ Demand continues to exceed supplies. Guatemala has had very hot weather and fruit is running very large to 9's and larger for the next week to 10 days. Honduras fruit will then start to come in and since they have had cooler weather there will be a better range of sizes. There are large ads on 12's out there limiting that market even more and very few 15's coming in. Product is still selling out the week prior to arrival on the small sized fruit. 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 dewes than on Cantaloupes. Fruit continues to sell out before it comes into port. Sizing is running large on the honeydew as well due to the weather. Mexican fruit has better availability. Quality is good.

**Onions** ↓ Jumbo and medium yellows are steady to slightly higher in the northwest but supplies are ample so don't expect any major changes in the short-term. Colossal and Super-colossal supplies are lighter though so we will see a stronger market on them. Storage reds are slightly

higher as the storage numbers are down. Mexico is steady on yellows and they have a few more reds this week but not enough to affect the market. The yellow quality has been excellent in the northwest and fair to good in Texas. The red quality has been good in the northwest. White onions remain strong due to light domestic supplies and very little crossing from Mexico. Much of the Mexican product is being kept in Mexico. Many northwest suppliers that still have whites are pricing day of shipment.

**Potatoes** ↔ The Idaho carton market is up again due mostly to processor demand. Several sheds are still not packing because they are out of potatoes. Consumer bags and number-two's are steady. Cartons are available but getting orders covered is taking a couple extra days now. 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- 70's. 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.

