



fresh Directions

March 22nd, 2012

An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

↔ New York still has Cortlands, Macs, Empires, Rome's, Golden delicious, and Red delicious. All varieties are slightly higher with very limited supplies of smaller fruit. Michigan has finished for the season. Washington Red delicious is heavy to 88/100's with higher color. Lower grade red availability is still decent. Golden are also heavy to 88/100's and the higher grades. The availability of lower grade Golden's is also better right now. Granny-Smiths are also peaking on the higher grades and the 88/100 sizes. Galas are still producing mostly 88's and smaller and the higher grades but are very limited. Cameos, Pink Lady's, Jonagolds, Fuji's, Braeburns and a few other varieties are still available but supplies are lighter. Many shippers still have clean-up deals on some varieties.

Asparagus ↔ This market is steady. Supplies out of Mexico continue to show availability in small, standard, and large sizing. Jumbo sizing is available as well. Product from Peru is also available. This product can be loaded in LA or Florida if desired.

Avocado ↔ Mexican supplies are much more consistent than over the last couple of weeks. Size 48's remain tight as growers are in clean up acreage that is yielding heavy to the small sizes. California fruit harvest will increase weekly with improving maturity, flavor and oil content.

Chile's volume will continue its decline weekly as their season comes to an end by the end of the month. Great demand is continuing to firm the market.

Bell Peppers Western ↔ Green Bell peppers continue unsettled as some spring production starts but demand continues to exceed supplies on large fancy fruit. Colored bells continue also unsettled, demand exceeds on open field variety as some fields begin wrapping up and production will shift to Baja California first weeks of April. Hot house bells continue with mostly adequate supplies.

Eastern ↔ Between bloom drop from previous foul weather and rain today, the pepper market will be tight this week. There is limited supply on big pepper with no relief until later in the week and off grades are of marginal quality.

Broccoli ↓ This market is softer. Most supplies are coming from Salinas as Yuma is winding down. Crowns are lighter in supplies compared to bunched product. Demand has fallen off and some suppliers have lowered pricing to stimulate sales.

Cauliflower ↔ This market is steady. Suppliers are better in Yuma as well as Salinas. The main sizing continues to be heaviest to 12 counts. 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 is firm. Demand has fallen off and although suppliers only have moderate inventories, there is plenty to fill all orders. 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. Smaller sizing is still commanding a higher price. The best deals available continue to be with the 24 and 30 counts.

Citrus Lemons ↑ Central Valley crop is harvesting and the Ventura crop harvest is slow as growers are letting fruit gain size. Small fruit is a little tight. **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 as well as all leaf items steady to start the week. Demand continues to be light. The main growing area is in Yuma. The Thermal area has good production numbers. Supplies out of Santa Maria are light in availability. Deals are being offered for volume orders so continue to promote as much as possible. **Iceberg** ↔ The lettuce market is steady, overall. It should be noted that some suppliers are attempting to take the market up, but overall, deals are being offered. Epidermal peel and blister continues to be seen upon arrivals sporadically. Lettuce carton weights are averaging 44-48 #s. Huron has begun production. The following week

should see more suppliers harvesting out of this region.

Melons **Cantaloupes** ↑ Demand continues to exceed supplies. Honduras fruit is coming in with a better range of sizes but remains limited on availability. Product is still selling out the week prior to arrival on the small sized fruit. Quality is very good and the market is steady to higher. **Honeydew** ↔ Demand continues to exceed supplies on offshore dewes. Sizing is running large on the honeydew due to the weather. Mexican fruit has good availability with smaller sized fruit available. Quality is good.

Onions ↑ The northwest is higher again on yellow and red onions; in fact many suppliers are pricing day-of-shipment. Reds, Supers, Colossals, and medium yellows are the most limited. There are still good numbers of jumbo yellows in storage and the storage season should go through at least mid April. Mexican Colossal and jumbo yellows are steady but supplies are limited this week, next week there will be more yellows as the first Texas shippers start packing. Mexican reds are very limited and Texas won't have any for the next few weeks so expect the market to remain strong. Many of the Idaho/Oregon suppliers have finished with their own reds and are buying from Washington. The yellow quality has been excellent in the northwest and fair to good on Mexican product. The quality of reds has been good in the northwest but has ranged from poor to good on Mexican. White onions remain strong due to light domestic supplies and light supplies from Mexico. Much of the Mexican product is still being kept in Mexico so expect the strong market to continue.

Potatoes ↑ Cartons are still short in Idaho but the market has stabilized. Many suppliers still need three to four days to cover big quantities though. Consumer bags and number-two's are also steady and their availability is better. Norkotahs are still more limited than Burbanks. Washington potatoes are slightly higher on all sizes and they are still peaking on 80-count. Colorado is slightly higher on counts as well. They continue to get much of the overflow that Idaho cannot cover. Colorado is peaking on 80's and smaller now. The russet quality has been excellent in all areas. Bakersfield, California is still packing whites and reds but will finish with its own product this week. Bakersfield will start packing desert product the last week of March. 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(s). Wisconsin is still packing a few reds and golds but they are almost finished. 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 the market is slightly lower on most sizes.

Tomatoes **Eastern** ↔ With new fields in the Immokalee/Naples area of Florida beginning to yield, harvests have increased over the last week and with less than normal movement at destination, prices have continued to drop. Quality is excellent and weather has been temperate. Reports have the next crop in the Palmetto/Ruskin district near Tampa to commence picking about the third week of April. **Western** ↔ There is a wide variance on quality of tomato

crossings at Nogales, AZ & McAllen, TX, and consequently prices are all over the board this morning. It appears that most of the product entering the U.S. is staying west of the Mississippi River from a destination standpoint, except for Roma tomatoes which are still getting nationwide distribution. New fields from the shade houses are beginning harvest, however, and should continue to produce for the next month at least.

