



# Fresh Directions

April 26th, 2012

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

**Apples** ↑ New York continues to pack light volume in McIntosh, Empires, Rome's, and Red Delicious. All varieties are steady to higher with smaller fruit being the shortest as New York is almost finished packing. Washington Red Delicious continues to peak on 88/100's and have higher color. Lower grade red apple availability will be tight and the market is stronger. Golden delicious are also peaking on 88/100's and the higher grades. Lower grade Golden availability is also down. Granny-Smiths are peaking on the higher grades and the 88/100's as well. Lower grade Granny-Smith are also very limited. Galas are peaking on 88's and smaller and the higher grades but remain very limited. Fuji's are very limited right now and the market is higher on all sizes. Cameos, Pink Lady's, Jonagolds, Braeburns and the other varieties are finished for the season.

**Asparagus** ↔ This market is firm. Supplies out of Mexico are very light. Production from Peru shows light availability as well. Domestic grass is being harvested in the Bakersfield region. Demand exceeds supplies. With the Mother's day pull just around the corner; look for this commodity to be active next week.

**Avocado** ↔ Great demand continues to drive the avocado market. Mexican supplies are decent, and growers limiting harvest to spread their harvest through the springtime. Maturity and flavor

are excellent. California fruit harvest continues at a steady pace with improving maturity, flavor and oil content.

**Bell Peppers** Western ↔ Green bell market is unsettled, continuing light supplies of fancy large sized green bell pepper keeping that market higher. Adequate supplies on choice and small fruit. Some growers are winding down on production as older fields play out. Colored bell pricing is very unsettled. Extreme Demand exceeds on all colored bell markets with lighter supplies. This will continue until other districts in Baja California begin to come online. Nogales will continue with colored bells but, supplies are gradually becoming lighter as some growers wind down. **Eastern** ↔ Bell Peppers continue to get tighter. Warm winter weather brought much of the peppers on prematurely with many shippers currently either finished or in process of finishing up. This has obviously led to a tremendous shortage which could possibly continue until GA begins production. Other factors contributing to pepper shortage include; thrip damage (insect), cheap markets during winter, labor, and overall less acreage (much less acreage in Plant City area). Much of the pepper being harvested continues to be of the larger sizes (jbo and XXL) with very small amounts of XL, large, medium, and choice available.

**Broccoli** ↔ This market continues to be steady. Supplies are coming from

Salinas and Santa Maria. Supplies on broccoli crowns and bunched broccoli continue to be strong. Most shippers are listening to offers for volume orders to start the week. Demand looks to pick up next week, so bulking up may be a good strategy for this week's buying.

**Cauliflower** ↔ This market is steady. The main sizing continues to be heaviest to 12 counts. Good weather condition has allowed pricing to be very competitive. Expect pricing to be very competitive throughout the week. Demand continues to be on the light side.

**Celery** ↔ This market continues to be steady, overall. Demand is light. Many suppliers are dealing with seeder, and yields are down. Supplies continue to vary amongst different suppliers and this has created a pricing gap of two to three dollars. Oxnard is the main area of production on this commodity. Santa Maria also has light production. Expect pricing to be active next week.

**Citrus Lemons** ↑ Central Valley crop is done with their harvest and the Ventura crop harvest is going at full production. Demand is exceeding supplies on 140 and smaller.

**Oranges** ↑ The Navels production and supplies are light. Harvest has not caught up with demand yet from rains a week ago. Size curve is peaking on 56's, 72's. Smaller sizes, 88's, 113's, 138's are demand exceed on supplies. There are a few Valencia oranges being packed, but very limited on them.

**Lettuce Leaf** ↑ The leaf market is active. Huron production has finished up. Salinas has begun production, but numbers are light to start the week. Romaine hearts are not cupping properly and yields are down with all suppliers. There is Epidermal Peel and Blister showing up in romaine, red leaf, and green leaf due to past cold temperatures. Demand is stronger. Yuma is finished. Supplies out of Santa Maria are expected to be light in availability throughout this week. **Iceberg** ↑ The lettuce market is active. Yuma and Huron have finished production. Epidermal peel, blister, and pink ribbing are issues that are coming out of the Salinas region. Lettuce carton weights are averaging 36-40 #s depending on the supplier. Santa Maria has production also available, with weights similar to Salinas's lettuce. The quality is fair.

**Melons Cantaloupes** ↑ Central American melons are coming to a screeching halt. Most of the remaining fruit which is not much is on vessels now. Nogales has some fruit available out of Mexico but it is very limited. The next few weeks' fruit will be very limited.

**Honeydew** ↑ Offshore dewes continue to remain very limited peaking to 5's. Mexican fruit in Nogales is coming in but now peaking to the large fruit as well. Small dewes are extremely limited.

**Onions** ↔ The northwest still has yellows available and they are priced lower with volume deals in jumbos and mediums. Colossals and larger remain limited. The quality of the northwest yellows coming from cold-storage has been holding. The Texas market is steady but most packers are heavy to mediums and have very light supplies of Colossals and larger. The California desert has also started and they are peaking on jumbos and colossal.

Red onions are tight in all districts! The northwest still has a few but they are almost finished. Texas has a few reds but is heavier to mediums and the market is stronger on jumbos. California will start packing reds next week. White onions are higher due to light supplies in Texas and nothing in California but they will start packing next week. The northwest is finished with whites.

**Potatoes** ↓ The Idaho carton and consumer bag markets are lower on all sizes. The number-two market is steady due to strong demand. Norkotahs are still limited and Burbanks are still the bulk of Idaho's volume. Idaho is peaking on 80 to 100 counts right now. Washington potatoes are also steady to lower and they are still peaking on 80's. A few Washington shippers are still offering volume discounts on cartons. Colorado cartons are steady due to limited volume this time of year. Colorado is producing all sizes but the peak has varied by lot and shipper. The russet quality has been excellent in all areas. Bakersfield is packing all colors of new-crop desert potatoes and has good supplies available. North Dakota is still packing storage reds and golds and they are still heavy to A-size but they are nearly finished. Idaho is still packing a few storage reds and golds and they continue to peak on A-size but their supplies is also limited. Florida continues packing all colors and the market is higher on most sizes and varieties. Most Florida packers are still heavy to A-size in all colors and are limited on B's and smaller. Florida has moved to the central growing area this week.

**Tomatoes Eastern** ↔ The market on mature greens has more or less completed the transition from Immokalee/ Naples to the Palmetto/Ruskin district in Florida, and volume from this new area is gearing up. Quality is excellent and prices are low. However, the crop is at least 2 weeks ahead of schedule, which could portend an end to this deal by mid-to-late May, which could cause an interesting situation if the next district to start—Quincy/Tallahassee, FL—is not ready to begin. Look for strengthening markets starting in early-to-mid May. **Western** ↔ Quality is still fairly good on Roma and round tomatoes shipping out of McAllen, TX and Nogales, AZ, thus these areas are still able to distribute to most areas west of the Mississippi River on a regular basis and keep their toehold in the market. Even though prices have not inched much above the minimum, look for volume to remain steady for a couple weeks yet, then start to dwindle starting in early May.

