

Fresh DIRECTIONS



An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

August 23, 2012

Apples ↑ New York has started packing a few Paula Reds. Washington Red delicious is still heavy to 88/100's and the extra-fancy grades but supplies are extremely short. Golden Delicious are finished for the season. A couple shippers have started packing new-crop Early-golds and Gingergolds. Granny-Smiths remain heavy to extra-fancy grade 88/100's and the lower grades remain short. In fact all sizes and grades of Granny-smiths are short. California Gala's are steady and the demand has been very strong. Expect the California Gala's to finish early this year due to the shortages in Washington. California continues packing new-crop Bartlett, Bosc, and Stark-Crimson pears. The Bartletts are heavy to the middle sizes so you'll see more deals on 100's and 110's than on the smaller sizes. Washington has started packing Bartletts too.

Asparagus ↔ The market on Mexican grass is firm. Supplies continue to be light out of Mexico. Peruvian product has increased production and the market has softened out of Miami on this commodity. There continues to be no 28 pound cases being packed by any supplier, only eleven pounders. Jumbo grass continues to be the lightest size for availability.

Avocado ↔ Mexican has finished their old crop. They have started their Flora Loca crop. The Flora Loca will have lower maturity than the old crop and will take longer to ripen. Overall Mexican supplies will remain light until their new regular crop begins in September. California volume is good and size curve has evened out with more 60's and 70's coming in to the packing house.

Bell Peppers — Western ↔ **Eastern** ↔ The western green bell market is trending up. Hot weather this past week and gaps are affecting production and quality, expect lighter supplies this coming week. Colored Red bell trending up as some growers will have lighter supplies. Due to gapping and hot weather has taken its toll on production and quality. We anticipate relief from the high temperatures this week. The eastern pepper market has been more active in the last few days and should gain strength with schools being back in session.

Broccoli ↔ This market is steady to start the week. Volume orders are being listened to as supplies are moderate to good with many suppliers. Santa Maria and Salinas continue to be the main growing regions for this commodity. There are no major issues to report in terms of quality.

Cauliflower ↔ This market is steady like the previous week. The larger sizes have a slightly smaller availability, but overall there is plenty to fill all orders. Volume orders are being listened to by suppliers. Light brown spotting continues to be seen sporadically upon arrivals, so please be aware. Most shippers continue to deal with this issue. Supplies are expected to be good throughout the week.

Celery ↑ This market is stronger. Large sizing has tightened up considerably and this has made the market more active. The option for Salinas and Santa Maria are the two regions to choose from when loading out of California. Suppliers are not offering volume deals like in the previous weeks.

Citrus — Lemons ↔ **Oranges** ↑ The lemon Ventura crop harvest is going at full production. Supplies are good, with good steady summer time demand. The Valencia orange harvest remains steady, with sizing peaking on larger sizes – 72's/88's, with very little 138's or 113's. It is demand exceeds on the small fruit.

Lettuce — Leaf ↑ **Iceberg** ↔ The leaf market continues to rise. Romaine has seen more active pricing amongst all the leaf items. Romaine hearts continue to have issues of fringe and tip burn. Carton romaine has had the same issues. Multiple shippers have reported this. Romaine continues to command a higher price than green and red leaf as well as butter. The lettuce market is firm. Because the romaine market is so active, expect this commodity to get more active towards the end of the week. There is not a gap in pricing compared to last week. This commodity continues to have issues of decay, pink ribbing and brown outer leaves. Santa Maria continues to have production. Weights have been averaging 39-44 #s.

Melons — Cantaloupes ↔ **Honeydew** ↔ In the cantaloupe market melons are still limited but with better availability than last week. Depending on the shipper some have small product available and some with larger fruit but mostly 12's. Temperatures are very hot in the Valley which is bringing on the fruit but there are some fields that ripen up over night and shippers are struggling with soft fruit. The Westside honeydew market is going strong with sizes peaking to 5's and 6's but all sizes available. The market is steady.

Onions ↓ Jumbo and medium yellows are lower in all areas with good supplies available. Supplies of supers and colossals are limited in all areas. California is still heavier to jumbos and smaller but they do have some colossals and supers as well. Washington & Idaho/Oregon will have more available as the week goes on. Colorado still has smaller yellows and light volume. New Mexico is finished for the season. The red market is still strong but will adjust down throughout the week as Washington and Idaho/Oregon volume increases. Whites are steady to lower in all areas but supplies remain light. The quality has been good on colors and in all areas.

Potatoes ↓ New-crop norkotahs are lower in all areas. Idaho volume is increasing ever week but many packers are getting more of the larger counts now so expect the smaller counts to firm up. Number-two volume is still limited. Washington norkotahs are still peaking on to 70's and larger. Russet quality ranged from excellent to average depending on maturity. Stockton, California is steady to lower on all colors but has good volume of reds and will flex for volume orders. All colors are heavier to the larger size in California. Washington, Wisconsin, and Minnesota continue packing pack new-crop reds & golds and they are also steady to lower with better availability in the A-size. The colored potato quality has been good to excellent in all areas.

Tomatoes — Eastern ↔ **Western** ↔ In the western market, the mature green tomatoes from California's central valley are supplying a large part of the United States at this point, with good distribution and stable prices. In addition, extra large vine ripe tomatoes are being shipped out of Baja California with good yields to date. Look for this situation to continue for the next few weeks, as long as weather leaves the deal alone. On all the eastern tomato deals, from the mountains of Tennessee to Benton Harbor, Michigan, to the Eastern Shore of Virginia & Maryland, a potent combination of rain & heat have taken their toll on yields in all these areas. Quality is good for the most part but picking has been sporadic and thus prices have remained on the high side.

