

# Fresh DIRECTIONS



An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

September 13, 2012

**Apples** ↔ New York is now packing Mac's, Jonamac's, and Gala's and the size profile is mixed. They will start packing Empires and Honeycrisp next week. Washington has started packing a few new-crop red delicious but the numbers have been low and they are peaking on 72's and larger! The smaller school size reds have been limited to put it mildly in the new crop. Most packers have started packing golden delicious. Several suppliers have started packing new-crop granny-Smith apples and they are mostly large as well. California is still packing Granny-Smith's and they are peaking on 100's and smaller. Washington Gala inventories are building but they are also larger than normal. California Gala's are nearly gone. Washington will pack a few Fuji's at the end of the week. California also has Fuji's & Braeburn's and they are both heavy to 88's and smaller. California is still packing Bartlett & Bosc pears and they are both peaking on 100's and larger. The Washington Bartlett market is more stable now as they have adjusted to California. The Washington Bart's are also large but they have some of the smaller sizes too.

**Asparagus** ↔ The market on Mexican grass is steady in the marketplace. Supplies continue to get stronger on standard and large sizing. Jumbo packs are much better in availability as well. The pricing on Mexican grass is very comparable to Peruvian product. This has not happened for some time. There continues to be no 28 pound cases being packed by any supplier, only eleven pounders.

**Avocado** ↔ Mexico's Flora Loca crop this year is producing good volume. The Flora Loca will have lower maturity than the old crop and will take longer to ripen. 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 on an upward trend. Expect some lighter supplies this coming week. Anticipated moisture and cooler temperatures in some growing areas may slow down some shipping production. Colored Red bell market is steady but growers are anticipating slightly lighter production. We expect some moisture and cooler temperatures

which will impact harvesting. Demand slightly exceeds market. Gold bells are settling but, they continue demand exceeds supplies. In the eastern market, Janine Baird Supplies remain good out of Michigan and the quality excellent. Georgia is still a good 3 weeks from starting up with pepper.

**Broccoli** ↑ This market is stronger on bunched product as well as crowns. Expect this market to get stronger throughout the week. 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. Supplies should be moderate to light throughout the week. Demand is stronger.

**Cauliflower** ↔ This market is stronger on bunched product as well as crowns. Expect this market to get stronger throughout the week. 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. Supplies should be moderate to light throughout the week. Demand is stronger.

**Celery** ↑ This market is stronger. All sizing is light to moderate depending on the shipper. The option for Salinas and Santa Maria are the two regions to choose from when loading out of California. Suppliers are reluctant to offer volume deals for the most part at this time. Oxnard continues to have a start date in early November.

**Citrus — Lemons** ↔ **Oranges** ↔ The lemon Ventura crop harvest is going at full production. Supplies are good, with good steady 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 supplies on the 113's and 138's, with 88's starting to get a little tight.

**Lettuce — Leaf** ↔ **Iceberg** ↑ The leaf market is steady. Romaine has moderate availability as well as green and red leaf. The bug issue has all but gone away as reports have been minimal. Romaine hearts continue to have issues of

fringe and tip burn. Carton romaine has had the same issues. Multiple shippers have reported this. Green and red leaf is light to moderate in availability. Demand has picked up. The lettuce market is stronger. Suppliers have moderate availability after contracts are filled. Santa Maria continues to have production. Good strong weights are being reported from all the growing areas. Weights are reported to be 42-45 pounds. Pink ribbing and decay issues have been minimal.

#### Melons — Cantaloupes ↑ Honeydew ↑

In the cantaloupe market several shippers are still gapping as the weather has cooled a bit and the product is not popping. The fields they were in finished up earlier than expected and the new fields are still not ready to start harvesting. Supplies should be available by Friday as new fields get going. Quality is excellent. In the honeydew market, product is very limited as several shippers gap moving from one block of fields to the next. With the limited availability the market is on the move.

**Onions** ↔ All areas are fairly steady on yellows. The northwest is still shorter on Colossals and Supers but has plenty of jumbos and mediums. The yellow demand has been fair. California has one shipper still packing and they have mostly yellows. Colorado is still producing mostly pre-packs, mediums, and small jumbo yellows. Reds are steady in all areas. There is still a large price-gap between Washington and Idaho/Oregon jumbos. Most northwest packers are still heavy to jumbos and are short on mediums. Whites are steady to in all areas with good supplies available. The quality has been good on colors, in all areas.

**Potatoes** ↓ The carton potato market is lower again in all areas, consumer bags are steady. Idaho continues to peak on 70's & larger however there is no shortage of 80's and smaller. Maturity had been a problem with some suppliers but the quality is improving. Washington norkotahs are still heavier to 70's and larger. Colorado is still peaking on 60's and larger but the smaller counts are also available. Russet quality ranged from excellent to average depending on maturity. Stockton, California is steady on A-size but higher on B's and smaller in all colors. There is some flex on larger orders of A-size. Washington, Wisconsin, and Minnesota continue packing pack new-crop reds & golds and they are all steady and also have better availability in the A-size. The colored potato quality has been good to excellent in all areas.

**Tomatoes** — Eastern ↔ Western ↔ The western tomato market has continued to strengthen on round mature greens, and prices on Roma tomatoes have risen sharply. But at the same time, these growers in California's Central Valley need to be somewhat careful about pushing the price point too high, as we are still weeks away from a hard freeze in the East with product in that region still available but certainly not plentiful. In the eastern market, temperatures have moderated from the Midwest to the Eastern Seaboard, while volumes from any of the local tomato deals in Tennessee, Michigan, North Carolina & Alabama are not heavy, they appear to be just enough for wholesalers to draw from these districts, thus not incurring the high freight out of the West. Markets are strong throughout, although quality remains hit or miss.

