

# Fresh DIRECTIONS



An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

December 13, 2012

**Apples** ↑ New York continues to pack Empires, Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Rome's, and McIntosh. They also have limited numbers of Courtland's. All New York varieties are large except the Macs which are small. New York expects to finish packing between March & April this year. Washington Reds are peaking on size 88/100's with higher color. Supplies of small lower grade fruit are light. Golden Delicious are also heavy to the 88/100 sizes and the Washington extra-fancy grade. They are yielding more of the lower grades. Granny-Smiths are still heavy to the higher grades and size 64-80's. Lower grade Granny availability is low especially on 100's and smaller. Small Granny-Smiths may be the tightest item in Washington right now. Gala's are still producing more of the Washington extra-fancy grade and continue to peak on 80-100's. Gala demand is very strong!! Washington Fuji's are heavy to 64/72/80's and are producing more of the Washington extra-fancy grade. The Washington Fuji volume I up this year so look for deals there. Pink-Lady's, Cameo's, Jonagolds, Braeburns, Rome's, Jazz, and the other varieties are all still available. Washington Bartlett's are still producing mostly 110 and larger fruit and are heavier to US#1 grade. Bartlett supplies are light. Washington D'Anjou's are heavier to the larger sizes and the US#1 grade as well. Bosc and red pears are still available.

**Asparagus** ↑ This market is higher on all sizes. Jumbo sizing continues to be unavailable in Yuma, but can be purchased in Los Angeles if desired. Standard sizing is the most readily available. There is a pricing gap again in Yuma and Los Angeles by three- four dollars. Supplies will be light throughout the month of December on this commodity. The holiday pull is going strong.

**Avocado** ↔ Mexico continues with good volume. We are seeing some limited supplies of Chilean fruit on the market. Mexican fruit remains the major supplier and remains aggressively priced.

**Bell Peppers — Western** ↔ **Eastern** ↔ Western green bell market is very unsettled; some indications market is moving on a slight upward tick. Southern California is currently shipping green bells from Thermal and Coachella.

Increasing crossings through Nogales; sizing will be more toward large fruit; supplies are more than adequate. Open field colored Red bell market is steady but still very light supplies. Growers are anticipating slight increase in production as new ranches come online. Coachella/Thermal California are currently shipping light volume. Demand exceeds market. Open field colored bells to started crossing through Nogales. Gold bells are settling but, they continue demand exceeds supplies. In the eastern market, there were very few shippers working pepper at the front of the week which led to higher prices and little to no availability. Rains in Florida have since let up which should bring the market down slightly.

**Broccoli** ↔ This market is steady. Shippers continue to have strong supplies and deals are being offered in Salinas, Santa Maria, Yuma or Phoenix. This is a good time to promote this commodity. Overall, the quality continues to be good with no major issues to report.

**Cauliflower** ↑ This market is stronger with all shippers. Supplies have eased up in Yuma and Santa Maria. Demand has picked up for the holiday pull. There continues to be sporadic complaints on brown spotting being seen upon arrivals so please be aware of this. Suppliers are aware and are doing their best pack a solid looking box.

**Celery** ↑ This market is active. The smaller sizes, 36s and smaller has the lightest availability. The supplies on 24 counts are light in availability as well with most suppliers, but there is availability. Salinas, Santa Maria, and Oxnard are the areas of production for this commodity. Production is expected to begin lightly in Yuma by the end of the week.

**Citrus — Lemons** ↔ **Oranges** ↔ In the lemon market, Desert crop volume is good. Size continues to be heavy on the smaller fruit (140 and smaller). Quality is good and improved availability on the larger fruit is beginning to show with some shippers. The Navel orange crop volume is good, but rains and morning fog has tighten supplies a bit this week. Gas time is down to 48 hours or less and should be moving down from there over the next few weeks. Fruit is testing well and color is improving with the cooler nighttime

temps that growing areas are now getting. Fruit is currently packing on heavy to the Fancy grade and peaking on the smaller sizes.

**Lettuce — Leaf ↔ Iceberg ↔** The leaf market is steady with most suppliers. Production has finished in Salinas. The quality in the desert on romaine hearts continues to have issues on bleaching. The hearts are not cupping well either. The product is very green. Sizes and weights are reported to be good out of Yuma on carton romaine, as well as green and red leaf. The lettuce market is steady with most suppliers. Deals are being offered on large volume type orders. The weights on the palletized lettuce continue to be steady at 41-44 #s. Demand is on the light side. Brown butts and pinking as been lightly seen upon arrivals. Yuma continues to be the main growing area for this commodity now.

**Melons — Cantaloupes ↔ Honeydew ↔** In the cantaloupe market, the desert domestic fruit is pretty cleaned up for the season. Offshore fruit is coming in with better volume, but fruit is still large. Pompano area with good availability on the larger sizes. There is limited availability on the west coast, the port strike is now over but it will still take some time to get cleaned up. In the honeydew market, there is good availability of Mexican honeydew coming in with shippers looking to move the fruit. The desert is finished up with the domestic fruit. Offshore has started on the east coast with mostly large fruit available. There is some light availability of large fruit coming into the west coast.

**Onions ↑** Idaho/Oregon and Washington are steady on yellows and but the market remains strong. The demand has been light so stay ahead on yellows and reds because when the demand picks up we will have an even stronger market. The shippers remain bullish because of lower storage numbers & export demand from Washington. Washington yellows are still producing mostly jumbos and mediums. Reds are also steady in both areas and the market remains strong. Most shippers also have lower

red inventories in storage so they are also bullish on them. Whites are steady but strong in both areas. The quality has been good in both areas and all colors.

**Potatoes ↓** The Idaho market remains low with good availability on all packs and sizes. Demand remains light for both varieties. Most Idaho packers are running Burbanks but several have Norkotahs as well. 40-70's are still the bulk of the Idaho carton production while 80's and smaller remain limited. Expect the carton availability to drop because of the lack of consumer-bag business in Idaho. The Washington market is steady on all sizes and they remain heavier to the larger counts also. Colorado is producing more of the larger counts and is also limited on 80-count & smaller. The Colorado market has adjusted down on the larger counts and up on the smaller. The russet quality has been good to excellent in all areas. Stockton, California is still packing whites and golds but they are nearing the end of the season. Both California varieties are heavier to A-size. Washington, Wisconsin, and Minnesota continue packing red & gold potatoes and they are all mostly steady. All areas have better availability on A-size. Idaho reds and golds are also both peaking on A-size and the availability is good. B-size is limited in Idaho for both varieties. The colored potato quality has been fairly good to excellent in all areas.

**Tomatoes — Eastern ↔ Western ↔** In the western market, limited amounts of larger size fruit are available in Baja, while large and medium remain bountiful. Little supply is crossing at the Nogales and McAllen boarder with the expectation that volume will increase near the New Year. In the eastern market, southern Florida is reporting good quality grape, Romas, and rounds during the first pickings of the Immokalee region while the Ruskin area finishes up with lighter than usual harvests during an abnormally cool November.

