

Fresh DIRECTIONS



An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

December 20, 2012

Apples ↑ New York is packing 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 in March and possibly sooner. Washington Reds are peaking on size 88/100's with higher color. Small lower grade fruit remains very short. Golden Delicious are also heavy to the 88/100 sizes and the Washington extra-fancy grade. Lower grade Golden's are more available than a lot of varieties but still limited. Granny-Smiths are still heavy to the higher grades and size 64-80's. Lower grade Granny availability is low especially on 88'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 and many shippers are sold out of them!! 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 potential deals there. Pink-Lady's, Cameo's, Jonagolds, Braeburns, Rome's, Jazz, and the other varieties are all still available.

Asparagus ↔ This market is steady on all sizes. Jumbo sizing continues to be unavailable in Yuma, but can be purchased in LA 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** ↔ The Western green bell market is very unsettled; some indications market is moving upward. 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. Last and latest weather disturbances will hamper production in some

growing areas. 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. Last and latest weather disturbances will hamper production in some growing areas. 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 higher. Shippers are heading into a small supply gap. Prices look to firm up as we go into the weekend. Overall, the quality continues to be good with no major issues to report.

Cauliflower ↔ This market is steady 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 beware of this. Suppliers are aware and are doing their best pack a solid looking box.

Celery ↔ This market is steady. 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 has begun in Yuma.

Citrus — Lemons ↔ **Oranges** ↔ The lemon Desert crop volume is good. Size is switching to more of the larger sizes (115's and 95's) with 165's and 200's lighten up with normal seasonal growth. Quality is good. The Navel orange crop volume is good, but rains and morning fog has tightened supplies a bit. 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 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** ↔ For cantaloupe, offshore fruit is coming in with better volume, but fruit is still very large. Pompano area with good availability on the larger sized fruit. The west coast fruit has mostly cleaned up the old fruit with new fruit now coming in and most is very large. With honeydew there is good availability of Mexican honeydew coming in with shippers looking to move the fruit. Offshore has good availability but fruit is still large.

Onions ↑ Yellows in Idaho/Oregon and Washington are steady but the market is firm on all sizes. Demand has been strong but is starting to level off. Expect light packing schedules at the end of the week as most packers want to enter the weekend with a clean floor, so we could see stronger pricing. Most suppliers are still bullish from Korean & Japanese export demand and lower stocks-on-hand. Washington yellows are still producing mostly jumbos and mediums while Idaho/Oregon has larger size. Reds are also steady to slightly higher in both areas and they remain strong. Again, most shippers have lower storage inventories so they remain bullish. Whites are steady to slightly in both areas. White availability is beginning to drop. The quality has been good in both areas and all colors.

Potatoes ↓ Idaho cartons are steady to lower on all sizes. We will run into some production issues due to the lack of packing at the end this week/beginning of next, but other than that potato supplies remain plentiful. Demand for both varieties has been fair. Most Idaho shippers are still packing Burbanks but several have Norkotahs too. 70's and larger are still the bulk of the Idaho carton production while 80's and smaller are somewhat limited. The Washington market is steady on all sizes and they are also heavier to the larger counts. The Colorado market is steady on all sizes. Colorado is producing more of the larger counts and is also limited on 80-count & smaller. The russet quality has been good to excellent in all areas. Stockton, California is still packing whites and golds but they are near the end of the season. Bakersfield, California is also packing Gold's and Whites. 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** ↔ Western Baja is plentiful with grape tomatoes, however rounds are in high demand and cherries are practically impossible to find. Supply is limited at Nogales and McAllen crossings and will not pick up until the beginning of the year. Mexico will lighten the pressure on Florida when production begins, however weather will continue to be a factor here also. In the east, irregular cold weather in the South East has brought heavy rain to Florida last week, slowing production for several days. The market remains tight with steady availability for rounds, while grape and Roma tomatoes are expected to resume this week.

