

Fresh DIRECTIONS



An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

February 21, 2013

Apples ↔ New York still has Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Red Rome's, McIntosh, and Empires. The availability is fair. All varieties are peaking on the larger size fruit except the Mac's which have ranged from large to small. The larger New York shippers are still expecting to pack through March. Washington Red Delicious is still peaking extra-fancy 88/100's. The lower grade and smaller size reds remain limited. A few shippers are packing hail-grade reds but supplies are hit and miss. Golden Delicious is also peaking on extrafancy 88/100's. Lower grade Golden availability is fair on 88's and larger and light on the smaller sizes. Granny-Smiths are peaking on 64-80's and the higher grades. Small fruit and the lower grades are in a demand exceeds supplies situation except on the Premium grade. Galas are heavy to size 80-100's and the Washington extra-fancy grade. Gala demand remains very strong! Washington Fuji's are heavy to 64/72/80's and are producing more of the Washington extra-fancy grade. Fuji volume is up over last year though and the deals continue with this variety. Pink-Lady's, Cameo's, Jonagolds, Braeburns, Rome's, Jazz, and the other varieties are still available.

Asparagus ↔ This market continues on a steady course. The availability out of Mexico continues to gain strength with most sizing. Jumbo sizing has even picked up in production. Peruvian grass is available in LA, as well. If loading is an option in Miami, Peruvian grass is available at lower FOB costs compared to California. Supplies look to be good throughout the week.

Avocado ↔ Mexico continues with good volume and good demand and they remain to major supplier and supplies are expected to continue very good from Mexico. California is starting to harvest and slowly increase in volume.

Bell Peppers — Western ↔ **Eastern** ↔ The western greenbell market is unsettled; indications market is moving upward on large fruit. Adequate supplies on choice and smaller fruit. Open field colored Red bell market is settling. Crossings ought to increase as weather improves and new acreage is coming online. Gold bells are indicating an

upward trend in FOB's as some are transitioning and gapping. Eastern Bells: Janine Baird This market is coming off a bit this week as demand moves out west. Quality and volume out of Florida are good and should continue to be so through the week.

Broccoli ↑ This market is active on bunched product as well as crowns. A few suppliers have walked in Monday morning sold out on all items. Santa Maria production is light and Yuma has hit a gap. Expect pricing to increase throughout the week. The quality is good, overall.

Cauliflower ↔ This market is a little strange. Overall, pricing is steady for now, but some suppliers are much better off than others. Some shippers have lighter supplies and are two to three dollars higher than the competition. Expect pricing to increase by the middle to end of the week with most suppliers. Look to see lighter supplies early next week.

Celery ↓ This market is softened a little. Supplies continue to be light out of Santa Maria, Oxnard, and Yuma. The smaller sizes, mainly the 36s have a little better availability, compared to the larger sizing. The supplies out of all areas are expected to be light throughout the week.

Citrus — Lemons ↔ **Oranges** ↔ **Lemons:** The Desert crop volume is good on large sizes as we see the size is switch to more of the larger sizes (115's and 95's) with 165's and 200's very limited. Desert crop will be finishing by the end of the month. Ventura crop will be ready to go soon. Quality is good. Market is firming on smaller sizes. **Oranges:** The Navel crop volume is good. Fruit is testing well and color is good. Fruit is currently packing on heavy to the Fancy grade and peaking on 88's/72's/56's, but still good availability on all sizes.

Lettuce — Leaf ↓ **Iceberg** ↔ The leaf market is softer. Supplies are better on romaine and romaine hearts. Blister and peel are still being reported on all romaine items. Green and red leaf is softer with a few suppliers. Blister and peel continue to be growing issues

that all suppliers are still dealing with. Although weather conditions have improved in the desert, crop damage will continue for the rest of the season in Yuma. Escalated pricing continues on all on all romaine items. The iceberg commodity is steady to start the week. Pricing is expected to be stronger by the middle of the week, as supplies are expected to be tighter with some shippers. The weights on the palletized lettuce have been averaging 40-44 #s in Yuma. There have been complaints on mechanical damage, pink ribbing, and epidermal peel. The complaints however have been less compared to past weeks. The desert region continues to be the main area of production for this commodity.

Melons — Honeydew ↔ Cantaloupe ↔

Cantaloupe: Offshore fruit is on the second cycle. Yields are above normal so there's good availability. Fruit is very large sized with limited small fruit around. East and west coast both have good availability. Honeydew: Offshore dewes are steady with good availability. The market remains steady.

Onions ↔ The yellow market is lower again and there are deals to be had. Most packers maintain that the storage numbers are low and the market will rebound but for now the demand is relatively light and supplies are available. Both Washington and Idaho/Oregon still packing mostly jumbo yellows. Mexican sweet yellows are also lower on all sizes. They are quoting Colossal and smaller now. Northwest Red onions are slightly lower due to the lighter demand. Storage red supplies remain relatively low in the northwest. Most Washington shippers will only selling reds with yellows. Mexico is crossing a few reds now too. Whites are lower again in the northwest as well. Mexican whites are available in Texas but that market is also off. The onion quality has been good in both areas and all colors.

Potatoes ↔ Idaho potatoes are flat with light demand. Several Idaho packers are still offering volume deals to generate movement but the demand is light. Most suppliers are still packing Burbanks but a few still have Norkotahs, and most continue to peak on 70-count and larger. Washington is steady on all sizes and they remain heavy to the

larger counts. Colorado is also steady to lower on counts and they are also packing larger sizes. The russet quality has been good to excellent in all areas. Bakersfield, California continues packing reds, Gold's and Whites but this is the last week on whites. All three California varieties are heavier to A-size. Washington, Wisconsin, and North Dakota continue packing red & gold potatoes and they are all mostly steady. All areas have better availability on A-size. North Dakota & Washington are coming to the end of the season. Florida is packing red and gold potatoes and they are heavier to A-size. The Florida market is slightly lower. The colored potato quality has been fairly good to excellent in all areas.

Tomatoes — Eastern ↔ Western ↔

Western: With the slowing of Roma production in Florida, Mexico continues to increase the volume for both Roma and Grape tomatoes crossing the borders into the US. Quality has improved from weeks past with better color and size available. Trade Agreement Update: The Mexico Trade Suspension Agreement averts a trade war that was destined to take place without an agreement, but the new pricing levels could cause many in Mexico to reduce plantings as the floor they are restricted to is proposed to be dollars higher. The heaviest affected items will be Grapes and Cherries, followed by Roma's and then rounds based on the new rules offering different floors by variety and type. The details of the agreement are being defined, specifically weight increases by variety. The proposed agreement will make Mexico growers look at plantings for next season to reduce losses as the new pricing will not affect floor pricing in the US or any other country. Since the pricing takes place March 4th if approved, growers in Mexico may discontinue planting existing fields if the markets don't support the new pricing. Eastern: Round tomatoes are of good quality and availability in the East. Larger fruit is easier to come buy since many growers are still harvesting their crown picks. Weather may also contribute to sizing in weeks to come but quality is expected to remain excellent.

