

# Fresh DIRECTIONS



An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.

March 21, 2013

**Apples** ↔ New York is still packing Gold Delicious, Red delicious, Red Rome's, McIntosh, and Empires. The availability is still fair and all varieties are heavier large fruit except the Mac's which have ranged in size. The larger New York shippers now expect to pack for the entire month of March and into April. Washington Reds are steady and are peaking on extra-fancy 88/100's. The lower grades and smaller sizes remain short but there is the occasional deal out there. Some shippers are still packing hail-grade reds. Golden Delicious is also steady and heavy to extra-fancy 88/100's. Lower grade Golden availability remains fair on 88's and larger but light on 100's and smaller. Granny-Smiths are higher and still peaking on 64-80's and the higher grades. Small and the lower grade Granny's are still in a demand exceeds situation. Galas are still peaking on 80-100's and the Washington extra-fancy grade. The Gala market is steady and the 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 higher so continue to look for deals with this variety. Pink-Lady's, Cameo's, Jonagolds, Braeburns, Rome's, Jazz, and the other varieties are still available.

**Asparagus** ↔ This market is steady. Supplies have picked up in Salinas. The pricing is a little higher compared to Mexican product. Mexico supplies are good. Jumbo and extra large sizing will be available. Peruvian grass is available in LA, as well. If loading is an option in Miami, Peruvian grass is available. Supplies are expected to be good throughout the week for Mexican product as well as California product.

**Avocado** ↑ Mexico has reached a point in their season where they have moved the heavy volume that they have had this year and are now down to normal volumes for the balance of their season. This means about 20 percent less than they have been crossing. California growers are still waiting to gain size to their fruit and only harvesting limited amounts (about 3 percent of shipments). They will continue to increase volume as we move through the month, but don't expect to see normal volumes from California until April. The market looks to be stabilizing at current levels.

**Bell Peppers — Western** ↔ **Eastern** ↔  
Western Bells: Green bell market is unsettled; indications market is moving upward on large fruit. Adequate supplies on choice and smaller fruit. Open field colored Red bell market are on an upward trend in market as some are transitioning or experiencing a small gap. Supplies are light as some new acreage is scheduled to come online but weather has hampered their start. Gold bells are on an upward movement in FOB's as some are transitioning and gapping. Extreme demand exceeds current supplies. The eastern pepper market has nudged up a bit in recent days as a reaction to Florida's cooler temperatures and some strong winds. It should remain strong through the weekend.

**Broccoli** ↓ This market is steady. Supplies are stronger in Salinas with some suppliers and better pricing can be had if trucks can pick up north. Pricing is competitive out of Santa Maria and Yuma. Expect pricing to be competitive throughout the week. The overall quality is reported as being good.

**Cauliflower** ↑ This market is higher. There are a few suppliers that are stronger on sixteen counts and sharper pricing can be had. There have been issues on brown spotting being reported upon arrival. The availability is expected to be moderate for the entire week. Salinas has begun production in a light way.

**Celery** ↓ This market is softer. Supplies have picked up in Oxnard. Supplies in Yuma are starting to wind down with many suppliers. Salinas has not yet begun production. Small sizes, 36's and smaller are commanding a higher price. Supplies overall are light in Yuma and Santa Maria. Oxnard production has picked up.

**Citrus — Lemons** ↔ **Oranges** ↔  
Lemons: The Ventura and the Central Valley are now the lemon producing areas. Volume is good on 140's and smaller, 115's and larger supplies short. Quality is good. Oranges: The Navel crop volume is good. Fruit quality and flavor is very good. Fruit is currently peaking heavy to the Fancy grade and on 88's/72's/113's, with 56's and larger are very tight with heavy export demand.

**Lettuce — Leaf** ↓ **Iceberg** ↑ **Leaf:** Romaine and romaine hearts continue to be on the light side. Demand however has fallen off due likely to high pricing and marginal quality. These issues are reasons for softer pricing on romaine to start the week. The blister and peel continues to exist on the production of this commodity. Good supplies do exist on red and green leaf. Blister and peel continue to be growing issues that all suppliers are still dealing with. Escalated pricing continues on all on all romaine items. Iceberg: This market is steady. A few shippers have begun the week with open pricing, as contract orders are being taken care of first. There continues to be complaints on mechanical damage, pink ribbing, and epidermal peel. This will be an issue for the rest of the Yuma deal. The desert region continues to be the main area of production for this commodity. Huron is expected to begin production by the end of this week. Early reports in Huron have insects present on leaf and lettuce. Growers are spraying in attempts to keep under control.

**Melons — Honeydew** ↑ **Cantaloupe** ↑ **Cantaloupe:** Fruit remains limited. The west coast is still extremely limited on fruit this week and they are trying to fulfill ad and contract commitments prior to any market fruit. There is a little more availability out of Florida but extremely limited as well. Most Guatemalan shippers are between fields with the majority of the fruit coming out of Honduras and very limited. The market is firm. Offshore and Mexican fruit is extremely limited. There is mostly large fruit available. The west coast, as with the Cantaloupe, is sold out until at the earliest Thursday or Friday loading. East Coast has a little bit of fruit but very limited as well. The market is very firm.

**Onions** ↔ The Idaho/Oregon yellow onion market is slightly stronger due to lighter supplies. There are still some volume deals out there but most Idaho/Oregon shippers are higher on yellows. Demand has been steady. Jumbo yellows are still the peak size in the northwest although

there are a lot of mediums as well. Mexican sweet yellows are steady along with supplies. Northwest Red onions are also higher due to lighter supplies. Mexican reds are steady to slightly higher. Whites are mostly steady in the northwest and the supplies remain short. Mexican whites are steady. The onion quality has been good in all areas and on all colors.

**Potatoes** ↔ The potato market is mostly steady in Idaho. The volume deals aren't as prevalent now other than 70-count and larger Burbank's. Idaho continues to peak on 70-count and larger in both variety's. Most Idaho packers are still running Burbanks while only a few are running Norkotahs. The Washington market is steady on all sizes and they continue to peak on the larger counts. Colorado is steady on all sizes. The russet quality has been good to excellent in all areas. Bakersfield, California is finished packing Reds & Gold's. Some Bakersfield suppliers are bringing in Florida product until they start packing desert potatoes. Expect new- crop potatoes from the desert on or around April 1st. Washington, Wisconsin, and North Dakota continue packing red & gold potatoes and the markets are steady but supplies are light as all three areas are near the end of the season. Florida is packing reds, golds, and whites. They are all heavier to A-size and the market is up on all sizes now. The colored potato quality has been fairly good to excellent in all areas.

**Tomatoes — Eastern** ↔ **Western** ↔ **Western:** Previous cool weather that has swept through Mexico has caused a reduction in supply, and is also responsible for a wide variety in color, quality, and size. Prices remain stable for rounds and Romas with Cherry and Grape prices firming up this week. Eastern: Rounds remain available in fair volumes; however Romas continue to be tight in supply. A cold front and some possible thunderstorms are expected to move over parts of Florida through Friday; however temps are expected to remain above freezing.

