



# fresh Directions

January 12, 2012

*An informative weekly fact sheet for the produce procurement professional.*

**Apples** ↔ Washington reds are still peaking on 88/100's and have higher color so more premiums and less fancy grade. Golden's are also peaking on higher grade 88/100's so lower grade fruit is limited. Granny-Smith is producing mostly 88/100's as well and they are also into the upper grades. Galas are peaking on 88's and smaller and are also packing out heavy to the higher grades. Gala demand remains strong and the supplies are limited. Washington Honey Crisp is peaking on 88/100's but the availability is really light as most packers will finish this month. Most packers will be finished with Honey Crisp in early January. Cameos, Pink Lady's, Jonagolds, Fuji's, Braeburns and the other varieties are all still available. Washington Bartletts are heavy to the US#1 grade and are peaking on 100's and smaller.

**Asparagus** ↓ This market has softened. Supplies out of Mexico have picked up on all sizes except extra large and jumbos. These particular sizes will be light throughout the week. Peruvian product continues to have extra large and jumbos available if needed. The Peruvian product loads in Florida and LA.

**Avocado** ↔ Mexico harvest will be good and steady as we move through the week. Market is firm and looks to stay this way until after the Super Bowl pull concludes. Chile's volume coming to the US is slowly increasing as the demand in Europe for their fruit drops.

**Bell Peppers Western** ↔ Bell pepper production is light for this week. Most production is heavy towards large fruit with light supplies on medium size. Colored bells are starting to trickle in but, mostly in hothouse variety and packs. Conventional colored bells continue demand exceeds. Cool weather has hampered open field bells and has delayed normal production schedules. Markets remain strong and do not foresee relief for another week or so. **Eastern** ↔ Supplies have been extremely limited the last few days due to the recent cold snap. While prices will remain high and the market active, there will be more volume in pepper this week. However, the market should not remain active enough to hold the high prices so we should expect to see the pepper market dip slightly toward the end of the week.

**Broccoli** ↓ Warmer weather in the growing regions has increased supplies on both bunched product as well as crowns. A few suppliers are offering special pricing, especially on broccoli crowns for large volume orders. Expect supplies to be good throughout the week. Salinas continues to have light production if needed. There continues to be supplies available in Scottsdale if the need arises.

**Cauliflower** ↓ This market overall is softer. There are some suppliers that have lost acreage due to quality and this has caused a gap in pricing by six to eight

dollars. Lack of demand has allowed some suppliers to have higher than normal supplies; hence there are a few offers available on sixteen counts. Growers are continuing to deal with brown spotting and yields have been affected. The overall quality has been fair.

**Celery** ↔ This market is steady. Suppliers continue to have better availability on the smaller sizes, mainly 30 and 36s. Santa Maria as well as Oxnard looks to be the main areas of production. The quality is good with no major issues to report at this time. Suppliers are willing to take product to Yuma for an extra charge. Large sizing is commanding a higher price.

**Citrus Lemons** ↔ Demand is still exceeding supplies of the small fruit (140's, 165's, 200's, and 235's). Tight supplies will go through January. The fruit is sizing up quicker with the lighter crop hanging on the trees of the Desert crop this year. **Oranges** ↔ The Navels are in full production. Quality looks very nice and fruit is now full natural color. Pack outs are running heavy to fancy grades.

**Lettuce Leaf** ↔ The romaine market is steady. Blister and peel continues to be a problem with all suppliers. This is an industry wide issue. Demand is light to start the week. Blister, tip burn and epidermal peel are issues we will be dealing with for the next couple of weeks. Green and red leaf will have similar issue as romaine, but not as drastic. The main growing area is in Yuma. The

Thermal area has picked up in production numbers. Supplies out of Santa Maria are light in availability. **Iceberg** ↓ The lettuce market is flat. Better weather in the desert has brought on good supplies with most shippers. Epidermal peel and blister are still seen upon arrivals, but the quality is expected to get better sooner, compared to romaine. Lettuce carton weights continue to be 42-45 #s on the average. The availability is good and demand is light.

**Melons Cantaloupes** ↑ Offshore fruit is available for loading in Florida, California and limited supplies in Houston. They are transitioning growing regions right now from Guatemala to Honduras. Product this week and into next will be more limited so getting orders in early is recommended. Quality is very good and the sizes are peaking to 9's and 12's. Mexican fruit is all but done for the season.

**Honeydew** ↑ Offshore fruit is very good quality and running to large size fruit mostly 5's and 6's. Honeydew will also be limited with the transitions of growing regions. Nogales has Mexican fruit still crossing with good quality as well.

**Onions** ↔ Yellow onions remain steady to lower in all areas. Idaho/Oregon & Washington are still discounting for volume. Colorado still has a few yellows but supplies are light. A few sweet onions have started crossing into Texas from Mexico. The yellow quality has been excellent in the northwest. Washington red onions are steady with flex for large orders. Idaho/Oregon reds are still higher than Washington and also steady with some flex for volume. White supplies are fairly limited but steady along with the market.

**Potatoes** ↔ Idaho norkotahs are mostly steady with some higher and are still limited due to stronger demand and the fact that more suppliers are packing Burbanks. Idaho Burbanks are mostly steady with some lower due to light demand. Idaho is now peaking 70-count and smaller Burbanks so 80's through 120's are now generally cheaper than the larger sizes. Washington is steady on all sizes and they continue to peak on the larger counts. Colorado is still peaking to 70-count and larger. The Colorado market is stronger due to light availability coupled with strong demand.

**Tomatoes Eastern** ↔ The size profile of the mature green tomatoes being picked in the Immokalee/Naples & Palmetto/Ruskin districts in Florida has switched from smaller to larger over the last week, and the price spread that had been present between the x-large and large sizes has narrowed considerably--we could see a one-price-fits-all situation shortly. Add to that the patchy frost this week that certainly has thinned out the crop, and the Florida market should strengthen over the next week as cold damage is assessed. **Western** ↔ Harvest of round tomatoes in 25# ctns should be in full swing within the week, with the beginning of volume on mature green tomatoes the week of January 9th. Look for the market in Nogales to get a shot in the arm as a result of the cold weather in Florida. Quality should be good to very good as yields increase.

