

FRESH DIRECTIONS

WEST CREEK FRESH

An informative weekly produce trend report.

January 2014



APPLES ↔

New York packers continue running Empires, Macs', Romes, Red Delicious, Galas, Fuji's, Macouns, and Courtland's. The New York varieties are still peaking between 88's and 100's mostly. The New York market is steady. Michigan continues to pack Red Delicious, Fuji's, Golden Delicious, Gala's, McIntosh, Jonagolds, Jonathans, and Red Romes but the varietal numbers are low. Most of the Michigan C.A. fruit is peaking on 113/125's now. Michigan packing is limited due to the cold weather hitting right now. Washington Red Delicious is steady and still peaking on 88's and larger in the Washington extra-fancy #1 grade. Smaller reds remain short esp. in the lower grades. Golden Delicious is also steady and is still peaking on 80/88's in the Washington extra-fancy grade. Granny-Smith is steady as well and is peaking on 88/100's and the extra-fancy grades. Galas are steady and peaking on 88/100's. Washington Fuji's are also steady and most packers are still peaking on 80's and larger. Honeycrisp, Braeburns, Pink Ladies, Cameos, and Jonagolds, and the other varietals are available and they are mostly large.

ASPARAGUS ↔

This market is firm. Supplies from Peru are moderate. Mexico production is sporadic and expected to be stronger in a couple of weeks. If loading out of Miami is an option, orders are being filled much better. Extra Large and Jumbo asparagus are limited from either growing region.

AVOCADO ↑

Demand is good on all sizes. Mexico's supplies are tightening as growers are pushing for higher field prices. Market is beginning to firm on all sizes to reflect to tightening of supplies.

BELL PEPPERS

Western Bells: ↑ Green bell market is heading higher as some growers have experienced a few weather issues. Crops are currently shipping from Nogales and from Baja. Sizing is now getting heavier towards large fruit as

some are breaking into new lots. Market is becoming active in the choice and small bells as some lots in Nogales are not up to snuff. Nogales will see increased crossings in the next coming weeks. Open field colored Red bell market are beginning to settle slightly. Mexico has started with increasing crossings through Nogales. Markets are very unsettled as both Hot House and open field color bells are trying to find their spot. Quality is good in both open field and hothouse colored bells. Gold bells markets continue steady availability depends on growing district. Demand exceeds as Mexican production has started in earnest. We are starting to see some hot house product crossing but still light.

Eastern Bells: ↑ With rain and cold weather throughout Florida, the pepper market has shot up. Temperatures will remain very cool for several days so product will tighten up accordingly and the market will continue to rise.

BERRIES

Strawberries: ↔ The strawberries loading out of California have the best quality and availability. California has been having some unseasonably nice weather which is helping bring on the spring crop. The strawberry's market is steady out of California, but could firm up depending on availability out Florida and Mexico. Florida supplies will remain limited due to rain and cooler weather during the past week. Market is firm out of this area. Mexico supplies are limited due to rain, which has been delaying transfer trucks to Yuma and McAllen. Demand is light to moderate, which is causing the strawberry market to be steady.

Raspberries: ↑ Good demand and light supplies is keeping this market firm. This is the lowest production of the year for Raspberries. Supplies will not increase for about another month. Quality is being reported as good.

Blackberries: ↔ Good supplies and light demand is causing a weaker market. There was some rain in the growing area late last week which could interrupt supplies slightly but with the weak demand I do not see this affect the market. Quality is fair.

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Blueberries: ↑ Supplies coming from Chile will be inspected as they come into the U.S. due to the European Grape Vine Moth being found in a few of the growing areas. This could cause some delays in product being released once it is in the U.S. Market has firmed slightly. Quality is being reported as good.

BROCCOLI ↑

The broccoli supplies are lighter in availability with most suppliers. This market is stronger. Production continues to be in Santa Maria, Salinas, Scottsdale and Yuma. The cool weather has slowed production and demand has picked up. Schools coming back after the holidays are one of the main reasons for increased demand.

CARROTS ↔

Supplies of carrots are good, with good size on JBO's. Quality is good.

CAULIFLOWER ↓

The cauliflower market is stronger with all suppliers. Many suppliers have walked in sold out to begin the week in Yuma. Supplies in Salinas are finished. Santa Maria is in light production but all sizing is available. Demand is up. Expect this market to be active throughout the week.

CELERY ↔

The celery market is softer as production has picked up in Yuma, Oxnard and Santa Maria. Supplies are expected to be good throughout the week although sizing is trending to the larger celery. The quality is reported to be good, with only slight bowing being reported. Expect steady production throughout the week on this commodity.

CITRUS

Lemons: ↔ The freeze in the Central Valley has now started to affect this district's lemon crop. This is not a larger crop, but will have an impact on overall supplies as we move in to the late winter through summer months. We already see the market beginning to firm up. Demand still remains very good on all sizes from all shippers. The Desert fruit supplies are good on 140's and larger. Smaller fruit 165's/200's/235's are just meeting daily demand.

Oranges: ↑ California Freeze may be over, but damage has been done. Look for even tighter supplies on the smaller sizes, 113's & 138's and now moving into 88's. Market has firmed up.

Limes: ↑ Supplies have tightened up with rains in the growing areas and the lack of picking during the Holiday weeks. Quality is just fair, with many lots showing weather related issues (Stylar, Brown spots and lighter color).

CUCUMBERS

Western Cucumber: ↔ Market is trying to establish itself as logistics is returning to normal routes. Crossings through Nogales are increasing but movement is still brisk. Quality is good and anyone with older inventories is cleaning up. Weather is seasonal although there is a slight chance of rain for latter part of the week.

Eastern Cucumbers: ↑ There is minimal volume remaining in Florida on domestic cukes so that market is not a factor. Supplies on off shore product remain limited. With cucumbers in the west tightening up and Honduras moving from old fields to newer fields, this situation won't get any better for the next week or so. Expect high prices and limited volume.

EGGPLANT

Western Eggplant: ↔ Market is settling down and supplies are improving. As with other products, the cooler weather and rain this past weekend is yet to be assessed. Quality is excellent.

Eastern Eggplant: ↑ The eggplant market is gaining strength, as is typical this time of year. Expect a gradual rise in prices as Florida's cold temperatures take a toll on this market.

GRAPES ↑

California Crimson will finish up this week. The market on the remaining fair quality fruit is in the mid teens. Chilean red and green new crop fruit is now available on both coasts. The quality is very good and the market is in the high 20's low 30's depending on size.

GREEN ONIONS ↑

This commodity is active in the marketplace. Previous freezing temperatures these past weeks have created low yields for growers. Demand has picked up. Mexico and California are the major growing regions currently. Supplies will be light throughout the week and pricing is expected to increase.

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LEAF LETTUCE ↔

The romaine market is steady. Weights continue to range from 34-37 pounds in Yuma, Thermal and Santa Maria. The green and red leaf is averaging 18-24 pounds and availability is good. Pricing is steady. Blister and epidermal peel will be more prevalent with all leaf items due to freezing temperatures. Demand is flat overall.

LETTUCE ↔

This market is steady to start the week. The weights are ranging from 38-44 pounds depending on the supplier. Yuma production will be good throughout the week. Epidermal peel, cracking, misshapen heads and ribby appearance are characteristics of lettuce right now. This is due to the cold temperatures in the growing regions. This market is expected to stay steady at least through the middle of this week.

MELONS

Cantaloupe: ↑ Guatemala is transitioning to an area where there is less availability of fruit and Honduras is going with very limited production. Cantaloupe we get more limited into the end of the week. The next few weeks will continue with limited volume. Demand is low so the market is staying relatively steady.

Honeydew: ↑ Mexican fruit is available but very limited with only a few shippers currently harvesting. The market is very strong and continuing to rise. Import fruit is extremely limited on the west coast with little to no market fruit available. The east coast is limited on fruit as well. The next few weeks will continue with very limited availability.

ONIONS ↑

Idaho, Oregon, and Washington are all slightly higher on yellows. This is due to the market historically being stronger the first full week of January; demand is only fair so far. If demand strengthens then the market could stay up, if not it could fall, time will tell. Reds are mostly steady in all areas although some packers are higher. Medium reds are still generally short. White onions are steady on all sizes. Trucks are still the hardest thing to find in northwest. The quality has been good in all areas and on all colors.

POTATOES ↔

The Idaho carton market is steady on both varieties but the availability is light. Typically the potato market also rises in early January but the demand has been only fair so far. Burbanks are still spread evenly across the size spectrum while the Norkotahs are still heavier to 40-80's. Washington is also steady on all sizes and their availability is also light. Colorado and Nebraska are both steady and they continue to peak on 70's and larger but supplies are also light as we start the week. Wisconsin russets are steady on all sizes and more evenly sized now but the availability is very light due to the cold weather hitting the northern U.S. Bakersfield, California is shipping Reds & Golds from Washington. Their market is steady on all sizes. Bakersfield is packing its own whites and they are steady but high. Western Washington reds and Golds are both peaking on A-size and the markets for both are steady. Wisconsin red potatoes are mostly steady on all sizes but there is some flex on B's. N.D. red potatoes are steady and continue to peak on Red A's but they have good availability on B-size as well.

SQUASH

Western Squash: ↔ Market is very unsettled on both Italian and Yellow S/N but, seems to be struggling to go higher. Most are new arrivals and pressing markets up. Northern Sonora product has been shipping for a couple months and soon will be on its way out. The cooler evenings are slowing down some harvesting. We and anticipate a few evenings of cold weather in the state of Sonora, we anticipate some slowing in production for some growing areas. Italian squash is wide ranging on Nogales FOBS. Holiday interruption has tempered the market from climbing.

Eastern Squash: ↑ Cold temperatures in Florida will hit the squash market hard this week. Supplies will become more limited as the week progresses and, despite the market not moving today from the weekend, it will gain strength throughout the week. Quality will be marginal.

STONE FRUIT ↔

Chilean cherries are available on both coasts mostly large fruit coming in. Chilean Peaches and Nectarines are now available as well. The sugars are low in this fruit but quality is good.

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TOMATOES

Western: ↓ Tomato crossing from Mexico continues to be light but better than the past couple of weeks. Recent warm weather has brought about greater yields helping the round market soften a bit. Romas also have increased in availability and are of better quality than the past couple of weeks. Prices should come down further as we get into 2014. Similar to Florida, Grape and Cherry tomatoes are widely available. The high volume and low demand has caused the price to stall at the mandated minimums set in place by the Suspension agreement at \$.46 per lb on loose packs and \$. 59 per lb for packaged items. Prices overall will continue to come down as supplies become more consistent near the New Year.

Eastern: ↓ Warm weather in Florida last week has brought about heavy yields saturating the round market causing an abundance of smaller sized fruit. Over all volumes will increase the number of larger sizes coming to market and prices should soften as soon as next week when western buyers return to Mexico for imports once again. The roma market has softened due to falling demand caused by high prices over the past several weeks driving consumers to find cheaper substitutes. Prices are expected to come down further as we get into the holiday weeks ahead as Mexico has more to offer. Cherry and grape tomatoes continue to be available in abundance. Low demand and high yields are expected to keep the cherry and grape tomatoes markets weak as we head into next year.

WATERMELON ↑

Market is heading up. Crops are sizing down as early crops are wrapping up. Current Nogales crossings are slowing down. Transitions taking place as Sonora crops start wrapping up in production. New district crops will be at a premium. Quality is good but volume is slowing. Some light supplies of northern Sinaloa watermelons crossing through Nogales. First lots of Jalisco watermelons have begun. The Jalisco watermelons will be at premium compared to other districts.





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