



# 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. Michigan C.A. fruit is a little larger now as they are peaking on 113/125's. Michigan supplies are limited and they are still scrambling to recover from the cold that hit last week. Washington Red Delicious are mostly steady on the smaller sizes with some lower on the larger and they are still peaking on 88's and larger in the Washington extra-fancy #1 grade. Smaller red supplies remain limited. Golden Delicious is also steady and is still peaking on 80/88's in the Washington extra-fancy grade. Granny-Smith is also steady but some shippers will deal on various sizes. The Granny's are peaking on 88/100's in the extra-fancy grades. Galas are steady and peaking on 88/100's. Washington Fuji's are steady to higher and most packers are still peaking on 80's and larger. Most shippers are into C.A. Fuji's now. Honeycrisp, Braeburns, Pink Ladies, Cameos, and Jonagolds, and the other varietals are all still available. Most of the varietal fruit is large but some varieties have smaller sizes.

## ASPARAGUS ↓

This market is softer. Supplies from Peru are light. Mexico production has picked up and by the end of the week, supplies will be stronger. Loading out of Miami is still an option if desired. Jumbo asparagus are limited from either growing region.

## AVOCADO ↑

Demand is good on all sizes. Mexico's supplies are tight as growers are pushing for higher field prices. Market has firmed 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 mostly from Nogales. 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. Cooler evenings are affecting production. The added demand from the east is pressing the market up. Nogales will see increased crossings in the next coming weeks. We anticipate some warmer weather but, evenings are still on the lower side than average. Open field colored Red bell market is higher as fields are not coloring up as a result of cool evenings. Mexico has started with increasing crossings through Nogales but added eastern demand is pressuring the market. 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:** ↑ There appears to be no relief in sight for the pepper market. Recent heavy rains and cold temperatures have caused this market to spike. While we may not see the prices get any higher this weekend, we certainly will see a considerable decline in volume. More cold temperatures moving into South Florida in the next few days will most likely mean they will have to hold off on picking for a day or two.

## BERRIES

**Strawberries:** ↑ This market will remain tight loading out of all areas—Florida; McAllen; and California. Florida received about ¼ inch of rain in the growing regions last night and expect more to come today. Most of the shippers will not be harvesting out of this area until Thursday at the earliest. Central Mexico is expecting rain/colder temps this week, but shippers are expecting to have better availability by the end of the week. California still has the best quality and availability, but cannot cover all commitments loading out of the west coast. We will see temporary shortage for the next five to seven days as many shippers will struggle to cover contracts this week.



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Expect to see multiple picks, last minute loading changes as well as loading date changes.

**Raspberries:** ↑ Good demand and light supplies are keeping this market firm. This is the lowest production period of the year for Raspberries. Most shippers are sold out thru the weeks and will only be covering contacts. Supplies will not increase for about another month. Quality is being reported as good.

**Blackberries:** ↑ Lighter supplies and better demand is causing a stronger market. Colder weather in Central Mexico this week might affect overall supply, which will delay transfer trucks to all coolers. This market will remain tight until end of this week or going into next week. Expect to see overripe berries due to the cold temps the past couple weeks. Quality is fair.

**Blueberries:** ↑ This market will remain slightly firm depending upon availability with each shipper. 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. Expect delays with the product being release once it arrives at the U.S. ports, which will hold up transfer trucks. By the end of the month, normal promotable volumes for February will be arriving by containers. Quality is being reported as good.

## **BROCCOLI** ↓

The broccoli supplies have picked up. This market is softer, overall. Production continues to be in Santa Maria, Salinas, Scottsdale and Yuma. Supplies are picking up as weather in the growing regions has been favorable. Supplies are expected to be moderate to good for the rest of the week.

## **CARROTS** ↔

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

## **CAULIFLOWER** ↓

The cauliflower market is softer. Again ideal weather conditions have created better supplies. This coupled with a lack of demand has created a downward price movement on this commodity. Santa Maria's production as well as Yuma shows better production numbers. Overall, the quality has been reported to be good in all the growing regions.

## **CELERY** ↔

The celery market is unchanged. Production continues out of 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. This market should stay steady throughout the week.

## **CITRUS**

**Lemons:** ↔ The freeze in the Central Valley has now started to affect this districts 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. Growers are reporting at least 40 to 50% or higher for some. Supplies on the smaller sizes of 113's and 138's are very limited and now moving into 88's. Market has firmed up.

**Limes:** ↑ Supplies have tightened up with rains in the growing areas. Quality is just fair, with many lots showing weather related issues (stylar brown spots, lighter color).

## **CUCUMBERS**

**Western Cucumber:** ↑ Market is definitely higher as slower production and gaps are pressuring market upwards. Crossings through Nogales are steady but with cooler evening's production is on the slow side with added demand from the East is pressing markets upwards. Quality is good.

**Eastern Cucumbers:** ↑ There is minimal volume remaining in Florida on domestic cukes so that market is not a factor. However, supplies on off shore product remain limited. With Honduras still moving from old fields earlier than usual to newer fields that are not quite ready, this situation doesn't look like it will improve through the weekend. Expect high prices and limited volume.

## **EGGPLANT**

**Western Eggplant:** ↔ Market is settling and supplies are improving. Weather is cooler than normal in the evenings and is affecting production. Availability is keeping up with demand. This is keeping markets steady.

**Eastern Eggplant:** ↔ The eggplant market remains steady with decent supplies. Cold temperatures this weekend may have an effect on this market by early next week.





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## GRAPES ↑

California Crimson is finished for the season. 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 on both colors. Due to the freeze a couple months ago the fruit will be very small with minimal large fruit available. We will see more shippers over the next few weeks with fruit available on the west coast. Currently the shipper pool is limited.

## GREEN ONIONS ↔

This commodity is steady. The weather has been better in Mexico and supplies are expected to be better by the middle of the week. Look for the market to get softer by the end of the week with many suppliers. Mexico and California are the major growing regions currently.

## LEAF LETTUCE ↔

The romaine market is steady. Some suppliers are attempting to take the market up, but demand doesn't warrant this action. Weights continue to range from 34-37 pounds in Yuma, Thermal and Santa Maria. The green and red leaf is averaging 20-24 pounds and availability is good. Pricing is steady. Blister and epidermal peel has been seen, but minimally. Overall quality has been good. Demand is flat overall.

## LETTUCE ↔

This market continues on a steady path. Although some suppliers are lighter in availability to start the week, supplies overall are strong. The weights are ranging from 40-46 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 past weeks.

## MELONS

**Cantaloupe:** ↑ Guatemala highlands are where the fruit is now being grown. With strong winds and growing conditions not as good as the lowlands, there are fewer yields. Cantaloupe will be more limited over the next few weeks. Demand is a little better so the market is up.

**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 ↑

All areas are higher on yellows due to slightly stronger demand and the lower storage supplies which were published in the supplies on-hand report. Some areas are as much as 25% lower than last year so the growers are worried. Most northwest packers are still short on medium size yellows. Reds are steady to higher in all areas depending on the supplier. Jumbo red supplies and demand are fairly stable while the medium reds are still limited. White onions are steady on all sizes. The quality has been good in all areas and on all colors.

## POTATOES ↔

Idaho is steady on both varieties but the carton availability is improving. Both varieties are more evenly sized now and the quality has been good on both. The Washington market is also steady on all sizes. Colorado & Nebraska are both steady and they continue to peak on 70's and larger. Wisconsin russets are also steady on all sizes and the availability is better now. Bakersfield, California is packing its own Reds, Golds and Whites now. The California market is steady on Reds and steady on Golds and Whites. 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 now. 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 higher on both Italian and Yellow S/N but, cooler evening is slowing production. Added demand from East coast is pressing this market up as well. . Most production is from southern Sonora and Sinaloa. The cooler evenings are slowing down some harvesting. We anticipate a few evenings of cold weather in the state of Sonora; we anticipate the slowing in production for some growing areas until evenings start warming up.



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**Eastern Squash:** ↑ Recent cold temperatures, high winds and heavy rains have kept this market tight. The full moon should help bring on a bit more squash, but cooler temperatures are moving into South Florida over the next several days so supplies will continue to be limited, particularly in the yellow varieties. This market could make quite a jump by the weekend.

## **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.

## **TOMATOES**

**Western:** ↑ Supply in Mexico continues to improve helping with the gap occurring in the East. With demand up for both eastern and western growers, rounds have increased this week. Romas are steady this week with the possibility of demand increasing through next week if Florida remains tight. Similarly, grape and cherry tomatoes are being supplied to the nation while Florida struggles to cover the East. Mexico production is expected to be in full swing by early February with supplies over all increasing over the next couple of weeks. However, with nationwide demand also shifting to the west it may be a few weeks until prices begin to come down again.

**Eastern:** ↑ There is a small supply gap from Florida this week as weather continues to pose challenges for growers. The round market continues to strengthen as yields struggle to meet steady demand with large fruit harder to come by. Cool weather is slowing the maturity of fruit cause picks to be smaller in size making larger sizes harder to come by. Roma supplies are also tight facing the same weather tribulations increasing the price for all sizes. Grape and Cherry tomato prices are also up this week by dollars while yields are low sending buyers to the west to meet demand. With yields down and more cool weather expected this week we can expect the market to remain firm possibly increasing next week as buyers gear up for the Super Bowl.

## **WATERMELON** ↑

Market is definitely higher. Crops are sizing down as early crops are wrapping up. Current Nogales crossings are slowing down. Transitions are taking place and supplies are sporadic. New district crops will be at a premium. Quality is good but volume is light. Some light supplies of northern Sinaloa watermelons crossing through Nogales. The Jalisco watermelons will be at premium compared to other districts that are left.