



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 and the market is steady. Michigan continues to pack Red Delicious, Fuji's, Golden Delicious, McIntosh, Jonagolds, and Red Rome's but the varieties are cleaning up. Michigan C.A. fruit is a little larger now as they are peaking on 113/125's with fewer 138's. Washington Red Delicious is mostly steady on all sizes. The smaller size Reds remain limited while there are plenty of 88's and larger. Golden Delicious is also steady and is peaking on 80/88's in the Washington extra-fancy grade. Granny-Smith is also steady but there are still deal on various grades and sizes. The Granny's are peaking on extrafancy 88/100's. 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. The Fuji market is stronger and is on the rise. Honeycrisp, Braeburns, Pink Ladies, Cameos, and Jonagolds, and the other varieties are all still available. Most of the varietal fruit is large but some varieties have smaller sizes. Honey crisp supplies are very short.

ASPARAGUS ↔

This market is steady to start the week with all suppliers. Mexico continues to have heavy production on all sizes except jumbos. Product coming from Peru is light. Loading out of Miami is still an option if desired. Jumbo asparagus still is difficult to come by in Peru as well. The predominance of the crop continues to be on sizes ranging from standard to extra large.

AVOCADO ↔

Demand is good on all sizes. Mexico's supplies are steady. Fruit quality is nice. Market has stabilized now on all sizes.

BELL PEPPERS

Western Bells: ↔ Green bell market appears to have stabilized as warmer daily temps are helping production. Crops are currently shipping mostly from Nogales. Sizing is now getting heavier towards large fruit as some are

breaking into new lots. Choice bells and small fruit seem to be coming off slightly as production improves. Cooler evenings are still affecting production though. Cold weather in the east has also tempered the market. Nogales will see increased crossings in the next coming weeks. 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. We do however see this market settling as warmer evenings may allow for better production. 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: ↓ The pepper market is dropping as shippers discover recent freezes did not affect the plants as severely as they anticipated. Quality remains good and the market continues to be strong.

BERRIES

Strawberries: ↑ Florida was hit with freezing temperatures over weekend with slight chance of rain with low temps all this week. Supplies will be very limited out this area. California and Mexico will continue to have the best quality and prices, but these growing regions do not have the supplies needed to cover all the holiday commitments. Mexico is receiving warmer temps, somewhere between the mid 70's to the lower 80's all this week. Quality is being reported as good. Strawberries are going to be challenging for the next two weeks as we get closer to the Valentine's Day pull.

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 week and will only be covering contacts. Supplies will not increase for about another month. Quality is being reported as good.



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Blackberries: ↑ Lighter supplies and better demand is causing a stronger market. Central Mexico supplies were tight this week due the rain; hail storms and colder temps from the past couple weeks. This market should start decreasing as supplies and quality should start improving if the weather holds up next couple weeks in Mexico Central and Oxnard. Expect to see overripe berries with quality will be fair at best.

Blueberries: ↑ This market will remain slightly firm depending upon availability with each shipper for next couple weeks. 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. Normal promotable volumes for February will be arriving by containers in next couple weeks, which will bring this market on downward trend. Quality is being reported as good.

BROCCOLI ↔

The broccoli supplies are steady but demand is off. Production continues to be in Santa Maria, Scottsdale and Yuma. The quality has been reported as good in all the growing regions. Bunched product has picked up in availability with most suppliers. If interested, better pricing in Salinas on this commodity is available from a few shippers.

CARROTS ↔

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

CAULIFLOWER ↔

The cauliflower market is steady, overall. Supplies are moderate but demand is off. The quality has been good as weather has been ideal for growing conditions. With no rain in the forecast, supplies are expected to be moderate good throughout the week. A few shippers are trying to take the open market business up.

CELERY ↔

The celery market is steady, overall. Production continues out of Yuma, Oxnard and Santa Maria. Suppliers have started the week with good supplies, especially on small sizing, 36s in particular. The quality is reported to be good. Shippers are listening to offers, so promote as much as possible. This market is likely to 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. Demand on the smaller fruit (165's/200's/235's) are exceeding supplies.

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 & 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 and lighter color).

CUCUMBERS

Western Cucumber: ↔ Market is steady as production catches up and demand has hit a plateau. Crossings through Nogales are steady but with cooler evening's production is on the slow side with added demand from the East is pressuring markets upwards. We anticipate the weather and evening temps will improve this week and counting on production to increase accordingly. Quality is good.

Eastern Cucumbers: ↔ Supplies on off shore product remain limited. Honduran supplies have increased slightly, but the containers are still slow clearing the ports and product remains tight. Markets remain steady.

EGGPLANT

Western Eggplant: ↓ Market is settling and supplies are improving. Weather is cooler than normal in the evenings and is affecting production. Warmer daily temps have brought up production and cold weather in the east has tempered demand. Availability is keeping up with demand. This is keeping markets steady.

Eastern Eggplant: ↓ Eggplant prices are moving downward as off shore supplies increase and domestic supplies remain in decent volume. Quality has been excellent.

GRAPES ↑

Chilean red and green new crop fruit is available on both coasts. The quality is very good and the market is in the low to mid 20's low 30's depending on size on both



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colors. Due to the freeze a couple months ago the fruit will be very small with minimal large fruit available. The west coast will not get another vessel in until mid week so getting your orders on the books in advance is recommended.

GREEN ONIONS ↔

This commodity has remained unchanged with most suppliers. The weather has been warm in Mexico and supplies are expected to be good throughout the week. Mexico and California are the major growing regions currently.

LEAF LETTUCE ↔

The romaine market continues to be flat. Suppliers continue to listen to offers as demand is way off. Weights continue to range from 35-39 pounds in Yuma, Thermal and Santa Maria. The green and red leaf is averaging 20-24 pounds and availability is also good. Pricing is steady. Blister, epidermal peel and fringe burn has been seen upon arrivals. Seeder is also been reported on romaine so please be aware.

LETTUCE ↔

This market, once again is unchanged. The weights are ranging from 42-48 pounds depending on the supplier. Yuma production is expected to be strong throughout the week. Demand is minimal across the country. Epidermal peel, cracking, misshapen heads and ribbing appearance have been seen sporadically upon arrivals. Again, shippers are listening to offers with good volume numbers, so don't be afraid to promote this commodity. With horrible weather in the Midwest and East coast, expect little action on this commodity throughout the week.

MELONS

Cantaloupe: ↔ Fruit is running very large to 9's with limited availability of small fruit. Better volume on the east coast with the west still struggling with availability.

Honeydew: ↔ As with the cantaloupe the honeydew are running large as well. The better volume is again on the east coast with the west struggling with availability. Nogales is still getting fruit in from Mexico that is also now very large fruit. Small fruit is extremely limited.

ONIONS ↔

The yellow onion market remains steady on all sizes in Idaho/Oregon. Washington is steady to higher on yellows. The demand feels steady but suppliers are saving product so they don't run out early and the growers remain bullish. The red market is also steady to higher. Red supplies are steady to lower depending on the supplier. White onions are steady on all sizes even though some packers have lower inventories. The quality has been good in all areas and on all colors.

POTATOES ↔

The Idaho market is mostly steady with some shippers quoting lower. The Burbank carton availability is still up since more suppliers are packing them, while the Norkotah availability is lower. Both varieties remain evenly sized and the quality has been good on both. The Washington market is steady as well and they continue to be slightly heavier to 70's and larger. 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 good. Bakersfield, California is packing its colored potatoes and the availability is good. The California market is steady to lower on Reds and Gold's, while the Whites are steady but strong due to limited availability and strong demand. 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 also steady and continue to peak on Red A's but they also have good availability on red B's.

SQUASH

Western Squash: ↔ Market is higher on Yellow S/N but Italian squash is coming off slightly, cooler evenings and transitions are slowing production. Added demand from East coast is pressuring 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. We expect this week for most growing areas to warm up.

Eastern Squash: ↔ Recent cold temperatures, high winds and heavy rains have kept this market tight, especially on yellow. Green squash appears to have loosened up in the past few days but could start to get tight again due to rain and cold weather moving in again.



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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: ↑ The nation's attention has shifted to Mexico for tomatoes this week as heavy supplies are becoming more abundant. With higher demand placed on the west, prices are holding relatively steady as yields rise to meet the influx of commerce. With all the focus on Mexico, the Round market is up slightly from last week. There has been little change to the roma market as supplies continue increase. Cherry and grape tomato demand has also strengthened this week driving prices upward. We can expect an elevated market as Mexico continues to carry the brunt of the nations demand through the beginning of February.

Eastern: ↑ The supply gap in Florida has worsened in Florida this week. Weather has dropped below freezing for several hours in Immokalee causing some damage to the tomato crops. The cool weather sweeping through the east has slowed production leaving buyers looking to the West for help. With poor weather forecasts continuing this week, we can expect the Eastern market overall to strengthen further through the end of the month. The market already this week has jumped up a couple of dollars on rounds. Roma yields have also been affected by weather creating a demand exceeds supply situation. Similarly, grape and cherry supplies are struggling to meet demand sending prices up with very limited availability this week. Next week we can expect even more Eastern buyers to purchase fruit in the west strengthening the market there as Baja comes into full production near the 1st of February.

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 and very light. New district crops will be at a premium. Quality is good but volume is light. Other districts have wrapped up. The Jalisco watermelons will be at premium.