

FRESH DIRECTIONS

Weekly Produce Trend Report for Week Ending December 18, 2015



| COMMODITY | PRICE | QUALITY | PRICE TREND |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mexican Avocados | Moderate | Good | VARIES BY SIZE |
| Blackberries, Blueberries | Extreme | Good | ↔ |
| Raspberries | High | Good | ↔ |
| Strawberries | High | Fair | ↔ |
| Grapefruit | Moderate | Good | ↔ |
| Lemons | High | Good | ↔ |
| Limes | Moderate | Excellent | ↓ |
| Oranges, Navels | Some CA/Chilean Navels | Poor-Vals Good-Navs | ↑ |
| Pineapples | Moderate | Good | ↔ |
| Green & Red Leaf Lettuce | Moderate | Good | ↔ |
| Iceberg Lettuce | Moderate | Fair | ↓ |
| Romaine Lettuce | Moderate | Good | ↓ |
| Romaine Hearts | Moderate to High | Good | ↑ |
| Cucumbers | High | Good | ↔ |
| Green Bell Peppers | Moderate to High | Good | ↔ |
| Green Beans | High to Extreme | Good | ↑ |
| Red Bell Peppers | High to Extreme | Fair to Good | ↔ |
| Yellow Squash, Zucchini | Moderate | Excellent | ↔ |
| Green & Red Seedless Grapes, Cantaloupes, Honeydews | Moderate | Good | ↔ |
| Carrots, Frisee, Spring Mix, Mache, Arugula | Moderate | Good | ↔ |
| Bok Choy, Napa | High | Fair | ↑ |
| Artichokes | Moderate to High | Excellent | ↔ |
| Asparagus, Cauliflower | Moderate to High | Good | ↑ |
| Celery | Moderate | Good | ↓ |
| Broccoli | Moderate to High | Good | ↔ |
| Parsley (Curly & Italian) | Moderate to High | Very Good | ↑ |
| Fennel/Anise | High | Very Good | ↔ |
| Peeled Garlic | Extreme | Good | ↔ |
| Green Cabbage | High | Excellent | ↔ |
| Green Onions | High | Fair | ↑ |
| Kale (Green) | Low | Very Good | ↔ |
| Red Cabbage | High | Excellent | ↔ |
| Snow & Sugar Snap Peas | High | Poor to Fair | ↑ |
| Spinach (Baby) | Low | Good | ↔ |
| Spinach (Bunched) | High | Good | ↔ |
| Yellow, White Onions | Moderate | Good | ↓ |
| Red Onions | Moderate | Good | ↑ |
| Round, Grape, Roma Tomatoes | Moderate | Good | ↑ |
| Potatoes | Variable | Good | ↔ |
| Red & Golden Delicious, Granny Smiths, Pinks | Moderate | Good | ↔ |
| Golden Delicious, Fujis – New Crop | Higher | Good | ↔ |
| Galas, Honeycrisp – New Crop, D' Anjous & Bosc Pears | High | Good | ↔ |
| Bartlett Pears | High/Moderate | Good | ↔ |



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MARKET OVERVIEW

We have a very slow start in Yuma due to the cold night that has significantly slowed the growth cycle. Expect to see high prices on many items. We are starting to see significant improvements on Romaine and we hope to see Lettuce improve next week. Broccoli is still very tight and Cauliflower is currently still in an Act of God situation. Broccoli crowns are non-existent and we are subbing Broccoli 14/18 to account for this supply interruption. The berry market is seeing improvements and we hope to keep seeing this move in the right direction as we head into January. Melons, mainly cantaloupes, are in an extreme market this week as well as celery. These next months will be challenging with the prediction of the developing El Niño. We can likely expect to see abnormal weather extremes through early 2016. We will keep you as up to date as we can. We are experiencing mild days and cooler evenings in Sonora. Culiacan is warmer during the day and mild in the evenings. Overall conditions in Mexico are becoming more favorable for harvest and production and we should see numbers begin to ramp up by the end of December in Central and Southern Mexico. Mexican production was dealt a couple of setbacks over the last month. Tropical storm Sandra hit central Mexico with several inches of rain and cool temperatures settling over Sonora for several nights, slowing down production on squash and peppers. While this was not a major setback in Mexico, it has slowed down and broadened the bridge between Sonora and Culiacan production making supplies lighter than expected. To add to the issue, we have seen up to 14" inches of precipitation in South Florida. This has caused major flooding in the fields and has slowed or halted harvest production. We anticipate shortages of east coast vegetables for the next 4-5 weeks. This will put additional pressure on our production out of northern and central Mexico through the first of the year barring no additional weather events.

WASHINGTON APPLES AND PEARS

The Apple market is low. Stocks are plentiful, particularly 100- through 138-count fruit. Prices for 72-count and larger sizes are higher. Sugar levels are elevated, measuring 15 to 18 Brix (sugar to acid ratio). The Pear market is low. Washington 100- to 120-count supplies are abundant. Prices for 90-count and larger fruit are higher. Quality is excellent: fruit is sweet, yet slightly spicy.

ARTICHOKES

Volume is steady. Most of the volume this week is expected to be 12's, 18's and 24's. Quality is excellent and most sizes are higher in price. Volume will drop as the weather cools.

ARUGULA

Supplies of both baby and wild arugula are light. Quality is good with minimal yellowing and thick stems.

ASPARAGUS

Market and quality is good. Still limited on larger sizes.

AVOCADOS

Prices are weak. Stocks are ample, especially 48-count and larger fruit; 60-count and smaller sizes are tighter. Quality is very good: texture is buttery and flavor is slightly nutty due to elevated oil content.

BANANAS

Supplies are much better and quality is good.

BLUEBERRIES

Peru and Argentina are done. Chile will be full force by the end of December. Most production is out of central Mexico and quality is good.

BLACKBERRIES

Steady supplies and good quality. Sugar levels range from 12 to 13 Brix.



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RASPBERRIES

We should see steady volume through the end of the year and quality is good. Sugar levels range from 13 to 14 Brix.

STRAWBERRIES

The market is still very active. We are seeing many quality issues including bruising, mildew and product being overripe. Cooler weather has helped with the quality of berries although they are still not perfect. Baja and Florida production will help increase the supply. We hope to see this by the end of December.

BOK CHOY

Availability is good.

BROCCOLI

DEMAND EXCEEDS SUPPLY. We expect to stay in this situation for another week with cold nights in Yuma resulting in a slower growth rate. We are still substituting Crowns for 14/18 CT Broccoli. Prices remain high and product is very tight.

CANTALOUPE

Market is very strong with limited availability on the west coast and better availability on the east coast on Guatemalan fruit, but melons are all very large peaking on 9's and 6's with demand far exceeding supply on 12's and smaller. The overall quality of the fruit has been good with nice internal color and some green to straw external color with a fairly even net. We expect to see better supplies in the next few weeks but sizes will continue to be on the larger side. Quality is very good: sugar levels average 10 to 12 Brix.

CARROTS

Availability is below average for jumbo carrots in the Cuyama Valley of California, located at higher elevation southwest of Bakersfield. Quality is good.

CAULIFLOWER

ACT OF GOD: DEMAND EXCEEDS SUPPLY. We are seeing high prices and NONEXISTENT supply. The crops in Yuma are very slow and the cauliflower growth rate is slow. We will keep you posted on the fields as we see more growth with this commodity.

CELERY

Please be aware that the celery market has been greatly affected by the weather. This has been the longest shortage that we have seen in recent history. Weather, disease and holiday pull have attributed to severe

price increases and shortages in the market. Celery is expected to get even tighter and rise more in price.

CILANTRO

The Cilantro market is limited. The colder weather will keep the market steady.

CORN

Late-season corn (yellow, white) from California is in limited supply.

CUCUMBERS

EAST: Our domestic crop is winding down and off-shore product is beginning to show up. The quality of the off-shore product is better than what is available domestically. FOB prices are higher by several dollars on all grades and sizes.

WEST: Product continues to cross at Nogales. FOB prices are generally steady.

ENGLISH CUCUMBER

Good availability in Nogales.

EGGPLANT

EAST: FOB prices are lower on all grades and sizes and quality remains good.

WEST: FOB prices are generally lower.

FENNEL

Supplies for the week will be average. Demand continues to be decent and should increase in the coming weeks. Sizing throughout the week looks to be predominately 18's and 24's with very nice quality.

GARLIC

Market remains extremely tight. We are now about 80% done with our harvest and the situation has not improved. We will not know where we will be with garlic for another few months due to the weather in California. The winter didn't get cold enough and the summer was too hot, so the bulbs on the garlic have not bloomed. We will be watching this weekly as the crop is very behind schedule.

GINGER

Chinese ginger is in good supply and offered at a substantial discount compared to ginger from Brazil.

GRAPES

Market strong to steady as we are basically done harvesting and packing some fruit out of totes that we have



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had in cold storage and cleaning up any problems that manifested themselves from rain damage and packing into cartons. There is a range of fruit quality due to the rains and cold night effecting the overall quality. We will have domestic fruit through December as long as the quality of the fruit holds up. The Peruvian fruit has started to arrive on both coasts and we will start to see some Chilean arriving the end of next week, the prices are very high and strong as the volume is minimal at this point. We will see some better volumes around the end of December and then by the middle part of January we will see good volume of Chilean fruit and the market should start to ease. The Red seedless market will stay very strong on imported fruit through December as the volume of reds will be light. Green seedless sugar levels average 18 Brix; red seedless levels range from 19 to 20 Brix.

GREEN BEANS

Tight supplies and high prices continue in Florida. While availability has improved in Nogales, FOB prices still remain firm.

GREEN CABBAGE

Green cabbage supplies remain below expected volume due to smaller sizing and lighter weight heads in fields. Quality is an issue and prices are high.

RED CABBAGE

Quality and sizing have been great, with great color and very little discoloration. Overall market is strong.

GREEN ONIONS

Iced: The market is steady and quality is good.

HONEYDEW

Market is steady with most of the volume coming out of Mexico and overall quality is very good with excellent sugars and nice internal color and a clean green to cream external color. The sugars are very good and we should have excellent supplies going forward. The Mexico deal should go through February and then it will be offshore fruit picking up the volume. Quality is excellent: sugar levels range from 10 to 11 Brix.

KALE (GREEN)

Demand is steady and quality is good with some occasional yellowing present.

KIWI

Good supply of Chilean and CA.

LEMONS

Market steady and very strong on 140's and smaller with the larger fruit is in abundance with deals being made to move volume. The overall quality of the fruit is good out of both dist. 1 & 3 with gas hours also coming down due to the colder nights bringing on color and helping to strengthen the fruit, we anticipate good supplies going forward out of both districts through March and then we will probably see things get a little tighter.

GREEN AND RED LEAF

Prices are a bit lower; Yuma stocks are increasing despite recent low temperatures. Quality is average, but freeze-related defects may increase in the coming weeks.

ICEBERG LETTUCE

Yuma has had a very slow start due to the cold nights. Please be aware that we will see challenges with the size and weight for the first couple of lots in Yuma. The cold weather will keep the market steady, however we do expect to see this improve significantly over the next week.

ROMAINE

The market has eased a bit and supplies have increased to adequate, but recent freezing temperatures are expected to cause frost-related defects through the rest of the month.

ROMAINE HEARTS

Supplies are much better and quality is good.

LIMES (PERSIAN)

The market is up. Strong holiday demand and inclement weather are diminishing supplies. Quality is very good: fruit is juicy and tart.

MANGOS

Supply is still very active and prices are moderate. There is fair supply on red mangos. Brazil has very light supplies and Ecuador is starting production. We should see this improve in the next few weeks.

NAPA

We have started harvesting in Yuma and some internal problems are being reported. Supplies are low and prices are high.

ONIONS

While demand has improved, pricing on all three colors has not. Red onion pricing remains firm while pricing on yellow and white onions remain soft.



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ORANGES

Market is steady with good supplies of 72's and smaller and tighter supplies of 56's and larger. The overall fruit quality continues to get better every day as we are experiencing some colder nights which is helping to bring on the color where we are down to 24 hours to 0 gas hours, and also really helps to firm up the fruit. The eating quality is excellent with brix levels around 12-12.5, and juice content continues to increase as well. We anticipate overall quality to stay excellent barring any major weather issues, and should have ample supplies of all sizes going forward as there is a good mix of size out there. Sugar levels range from 12 to 13 Brix.

PARSLEY (CURLY, ITALIAN)

This week's averages are below normal for curly parsley. Prices are high but overall quality and appearance continues to be very nice.

GREEN BELL PEPPER

EAST: Quality and shelf-life continue to be a concern. Accordingly, inventory levels should continue to be kept as tight as possible. FOB prices on #1 product are generally steady with upward pressure whereas the choice grades are higher by several dollars this week.

WEST: FOB prices are generally steady this week on all grades and sizes.

JALAPEÑO PEPPER

EAST: FOB prices generally steady with downward pressure.

WEST: FOB prices are lower this week.

RED PEPPER

Red bells are finishing up in the desert and field production is extremely light in Baja, forcing a shift to hot house. Red bell market will remain short until mainland Mexico begins to scratch fields late this week or early next week.

PINEAPPLE

Prices are slightly lower than last week; stocks are adequate. Quality is average: fruit is firm yet juicy. Sugar levels are approximately 16 Brix in Costa Rica and range from 13 to 14 Brix in Mexico.

POTATOES (IDAHO)

The carton supply remains plentiful on all sizes. Demand is peaking on 'middle' sized cartons between 60ct and 80ct. Cold temperatures this week in Idaho have forced several growers to stop running. Supplies are still exceeding demand allowing pricing to remain consistent. All

reports are indicating higher prices this season due to a decrease in supply.

SALADS & BLENDS

Prices remain elevated; raw product volume is low. Inspectors are monitoring quality and shelf-life retains closely due to recent freezing temperatures.

SNOW AND SUGAR SNAP PEAS

Snow and sugar snap peas are steady and quality is good.

SPINACH (BABY)

Baby Spinach and Clipped Spinach supplies are good. Quality is good with some thicker stems. There are some with weaker texture and inconsistent leaf-sizing.

SPINACH (BUNCHED)

Steady volume and quality is good. The market has come off a bit but still staying strong.

SPRING MIX

Prices are unchanged. Despite freezing temperatures, volume is high. Cold-related quality problems are being monitored closely by inspectors.

GREEN SQUASH

EAST: FOB prices are sharply higher this week. Quality and shelf-life is more variable.

WEST: Crossings continue at Nogales. FOB prices are generally steady this week.

YELLOW SQUASH

EAST: Supplies are tight and FOB prices are sharply higher this week on both medium and fancy grades. Quality and shelf life is more variable and generally fair at best.

WEST: Crossings continue at Nogales. FOB prices steady this week.

TOMATOES

EAST

Rounds

Thirteen inches of rain have kept harvesters out of the Homestead fields since Thursday. Rain and clouds in our other south Florida growing regions have sharply decreased volume out of those fields. This has caused a sharp decline in supplies with has caused FOB prices to jump sharply this week with even higher prices forecasted for later this week. The round market was so active and unsettled that the USDA could not settle on a quote on



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Tuesday. We forecast that these high markets will continue for 4-6 weeks when more supplies should be coming online. Quality and shelf-life will certainly suffer during this time and we recommend that inventories be kept as tight as possible as we work through this product.

Romas

Supplies are extremely tight and will not meet demand. FOB prices are higher on all sizes. Quality and self-life is variable and suspect. We expect FOB prices to continue to rise daily as demand chases the limited supplies available. We do not expect to see any real relieve on roma FOB prices until the Mexican crop ramps up to pump more nationwide supply into the system. We expect that crop to begin with volume shortly after the New Year.

Grapes

FOB prices on the 12/1 flats and the bulk pack are up compared to last week due to shrinking supplies. Quality is fair to good.

Cherries

Supplies are very tight but demand is still weak which has only caused FOB prices to rise moderately over the past week. Quality is variable.

WEST/MEXICO

Rounds

The West continues to look to Florida to meet their demand for mature greens. Vine-ripes continue to cross at Otay Mesa, McAllen and Nogales but supplies have become extremely tight due to rains and FOB prices are higher.

Romas

Supplies remain relatively constant but the lack of eastern supplies is putting more demand on the Mexican crop. FOB prices are several dollars higher on all sizes.

Grapes

We are still seeing a very wide range in quality. Grapes are crossing at Baja and Nogales with light volume and most re-packers are sourcing out of Florida due to pricing and quality issues.

Cherries

Limited supplies continue and there continues to be a wide range of prices due to a wide range of quality. But like the grape tomatoes, most re-packers are sourcing out of Florida due to pricing and quality issues.

WATERMELONS

Although Mexican supplies are starting to increase, the market remains elevated. The Florida and offshore seasons will begin by late December. Seeded fruit is extremely tight. Quality is very good: fruit is sweet and juicy. Sugar levels range from 11 to 13 Brix.