



# The Source

March 23, 2009

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## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

**No Food Safety Alerts at this time.**



## ALERT

*Broccoli and Cauliflower supplies are extremely short this week. Please see each commodity section below for more details*

### Weather:

High pressure builds out on the West Coast behind the exiting storm system with cool windy conditions today. A gradual warm up is expected through the week as a weak cold front moves into Northern California mid week moderating temperatures, with above normal temperatures expected by the weekend. Long range forecasts anticipate continued warming and dry conditions through March.

In the Southeast near seasonal temperatures with a chance of rain showers, mainly north of Florida, are forecast through this week. An approaching cold front will bring a cool down and a continued chance of showers to the region as it moves through mid-week.



### Freight:

Trucks in California and Idaho remain steady. Washington is tightening up a little due to nursery stock starting. Crude oil continues to rise and is currently at \$53.73 up \$1.66 today. The National Average on diesel has went up 7.3 cents to \$2.09 per gallon

# Commodity Updates

## **APPLES/PEARS**

KEEP pushing Apples! Granny Smith and Fuji Apples, especially in the smaller sizes and lower grades are PLENTIFUL. Remember, the lower grades don't mean lower quality, just less than full color! There are deals available and keep promoting! Washington remains the leading production area for apples and will so through the spring and summer months.

Regional production areas including Michigan and New York continue shipping light supplies of storage apples; demand remains light for those. Washington and Oregon Pears continue light production from storage including mainly the Anjou and Bosc with only a few left in the Golden Bosc varieties.

## **ASPARAGUS**

The market continues to be steady to start the week. Mexico is expected to finish up production by the end of the week. This market should be stronger by Friday. Supplies continue to get stronger out of California. Supplies are good on eleven and twenty-eight pound packs.

## **AVOCADO**

**Mexican fruit** – Mexican is bringing good steady supplies into the states. Supplies are good. Demand continues to be good.

**Chilean Fruit** – Still a few Chilean avocados coming in, but very limited. Their season will be finish by the end of the month.

**California Fruit** - Growers are harvesting limited volume, but look to increase production as we move through March.

## **BELL PEPPERS**

**Western Green Bells and Colored Bells:** Still very light supplies of green bells coming from Mexico as volume continues to drop off, with size and quality problems. The California desert looks to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April. Demand is very good. Red and yellow bell supplies remain light.

**Eastern Bells:** The market on bell peppers continues a steady decline as more volume becomes available in Florida. The market should continue a steady drop through the week and then begin an upward trend in another 7-10 days as growing areas transition.

## Commodities at a glance...

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Market</u>
Apples	Excellent	Steady
Asparagus	Good	Steady
Avocado (Mexican)	Good	Steady
Avocado (Chilean)	Good	Steady
Bell Peppers (Western)	Fair	Lower
Bell Peppers (Eastern)	Fair	Lower
Berries: Strawberries	Good	Higher
Berries: Raspberries	Fair / Good	Steady
Berries: Blackberries	Good	Steady
Berries: Blueberries	Fair	Higher
Broccoli	Good	Higher
Carrots	Good	Steady
Cauliflower	Fair	Higher
Celery	Good	Steady
Citrus: Lemons	Good	Steady
Citrus: Oranges	Good	Steady
Cucumbers (Western)	Fair	Higher
Cucumbers (Eastern)	Poor	Higher
Grapes	Good	Steady
Green Onions	Good	Steady
Kiwi	Good	Steady
Lettuce: Leaf	Good	Lower
Lettuce: Iceberg	Good	Steady
Melons: Cantaloupes	Good	Steady
Melons: Honeydews	Good	Steady
Onions	Good	Steady
Pears	Excellent	Steady
Potatoes	Excellent	Steady
Squash (Western)	Fair	Steady
Squash (Eastern)	Good	Lower
Stone Fruit	Good	Steady
Tomatoes (Western)	Good	Higher
Tomatoes (Eastern)	Good	Higher
Watermelons	Good	Higher

## Legend

Quality  
Excellent  
Good  
Fair  
Poor

Market  
Steady  
Higher  
Lower

# Commodity Updates *continued*

## **BERRIES**

**Strawberries:** California strawberry production this week is starting with mixed reports. Some shippers have better production than others. We have had a cold front accompanied with some minor rain showers. The rain has not affected production greatly but the cooler temps are keeping production a bit lower than expected. Shippers are talking up the second half of the week to be much better volume. Florida is starting to slow down with production. Some shippers have all together finished and some are starting the down-swing of production. McAllen is completely finished with strawberries and only shipping small quantities of bush berries.

**Raspberries** Raspberry production continues tight this week and will continue to be snug due to diminished transfers from Mexico. Some shippers are anticipating a late push of Mexican production in April. There has been some local California production, but the numbers have fallen greatly. Quality has been affected with California production. We can expect tight supplies until local Northern and Southern Californian production gets going.

**Blackberries:** Blackberry production is steady with respectfully consistent transfers arriving from Mexico. There are some shippers in much better shape than others but definitely less product than in previous weeks. We are now looking at local production to increase but are currently dealing with predominantly transferred fruit. There are some shippers currently putting out some aggressive pricing in anticipation of a big push in volume over the next couple of months.

**Blueberries:** Blueberry transfers are slowing down from Chile and some shippers are looking for higher fobs. We are seeing less fruit arriving on vessels, and see the end of boat fruit soon. Most to all Chilean fruit is now air freight, meaning less fruit on each transfer. Some shippers are expressing that we may see the end of Chilean product by the end of the month. There are small quantities of local Californian blues with great size and quality (under hoops). We can expect a gap as the eastern early varieties were affected by early frost damage.

## **BROCCOLI**

Pricing is extremely active on bunched and crown business. Both Salinas and Santa Maria have experienced very cold night time temperatures these past few weeks. Pricing will be very active all week. The production on bunched broccoli has become much tighter compared to the previous week. Mexico production continues to be an option for broccoli crowns.

## **CARROTS**

California carrots have moved into new fields in Imperial Valley. Size is running small right now as cool weather has slowed growth. This has lighted supplies of jumbo sized carrots. Size is expected to come back in the next couple of weeks. Quality remains good. Georgia has good availability and quality on the East Coast.

## **CAULIFLOWER**

This commodity continues to be tight with all suppliers. Yuma is winding down production and Salinas has production on the light side. Santa Maria is also on the light side of production. Expect this market to be active throughout the week. Some defects reported include off-white yellowing and occasional black spotting. Demand is definitely stronger.

## **CELERY**

This market continues to be steady with most suppliers. Yuma has light production with the predominance of product being harvested in Oxnard. Small sizing, 36's and smaller are the tightest sizes to purchase. The Salinas valley expects to begin production in the early part of June.

## **CITRUS**

**Lemon:** The Coachella and Yuma areas are 100% picked and the Central Valley is 70% picked. Most of the volume is coming out of Ventura County. Supplies are peaking on 140's. There are good supplies of 165's, with 200's being a little on the tight side.

**Oranges:** There will be good supplies of Navels available into May. Peak sizes are 48's through 88's. There is limited harvest starting on Valencia's.

# Commodity Updates *continued*

## CUCUMBERS

**Western Cucumber:** Production continues light again this week from Mexico as Southern growers come to the end of fields, and what volume they are sending is heavier to off grades. New fields are just starting with light production, and slowly increase through the month. The coming April supplies should be much better.

**Eastern Cucumbers:** With Honduras finished up and South Florida still a good 2-3 weeks away from ample supplies, the cucumber market is at the highest it has been in over a year. Quality issues abound in the final off shore shipments while the beginnings of the domestic supplies are undersized and scarred. Scarce supplies and a screaming market will be the go for the next two weeks.

## GRAPES

Green Grape supplies still far outweigh the red and there are still very good prices. For the next 10-14 days there will excellent supplies of green seedless grapes. Quality is excellent and there are even some JUMBO sizes available with excellent color and flavor! Prices are very attractive and both Coasts have very good availability. Red Seedless supplies are getting better and Crimson red seedless is now the predominant variety available. Demand is still strong for red seedless but supplies are better and able to be met by the supply line. There are still only light supplies of Black seedless and seeded Red Globes, and overall grape quality remains very good.

## GREEN ONIONS

There is no change on this market in comparison to the past weeks. Supplies continue to be excellent out of the Mexico growing region. The market remains steady with very inexpensive prices. Defects such as decay, slime, and yellowing have been minimal.

## KIWI

Italian Kiwi supplies are steady and demand is only moderate. Quality remains very good and with the fair demand the market will remain unchanged.

## LEAF LETTUCE

This market is on the down side. Yuma has had warm temperatures and suppliers are looking to keep movement occurring on all leaf items. Avoiding liner packed product will allow for better arrivals for product. Dehydration tends to occur to product being packed in a liner box in warm growing areas. Suppliers are looking to move volume orders and deals are available so please be aware. Some Quality defects continue to include fringe burn, tip burn, and wind burn.

## LETTUCE

The lettuce market has started the week steady as in the previous week. Many suppliers have enough volume to cover orders in full. With the warm temperatures in Yuma, expect lettuce to wind down production with many suppliers. Some suppliers, however are expected to continue production in Yuma until mid- April due to late plantings. Huron production will start on Monday March 23. Supplies should be average with most suppliers throughout the front side of the week.



## MELONS

**Cantaloupes:** Guatemala is coming into their second cycle and fruit is on its way. The Honduras/Costa Rica volumes are decreasing and demand continues strong. Cantaloupe markets are slightly stronger in the 9 and 12ct sizes. The smaller sizes (15's & 18's)\* have less demand and the market should remain steady this week. Sugar levels and eating quality remain high!

**Honeydews:** Smaller sizes have firmed up and the market is slightly higher on those, as there are lighter supplies overall. Similar to the

# Commodity Updates *continued*

cantaloupes, Honduras and Costa Rica are winding down with Guatemala's second cycle approaching. Quality remains very good!

## **ONIONS**

There are several shippers in Idaho/Oregon finishing their pack out for the season. However, our main suppliers look to continue to have availability through the end of April. There are still good supplies of all colors and sizes of onions in Idaho and Washington. Mexican product is now in Texas with good supplies of all colors, quality is good. Texas onions grown onions are now available running jumbo and smaller.

## **POTATOES**

Norkotahs are finishing up for the season and Burbanks will be the only varietal available out of Idaho. Burbanks are running to the smaller side so larger sizes may begin to get snug. We are trying to get all requests for a particular varietal fulfilled, by time of shipment Burbanks and/or Norkotahs may be the only product available. Wisconsin and Colorado have good supplies and quality. Colored potatoes are loading out of North Dakota and Wisconsin with Washington almost cleaned up for the season. California has good quality and supplies of colored potatoes. Florida is now going with good quality.

## **SQUASH**

**Western Squash:** Nogales supplies of squash remains lighter, but looks like new fields will increase volumes over the next 2 weeks.

**Eastern Squash:** The squash market is making a dramatic downward turn after weeks at the higher levels. Plenty of warm, sunny weather has brought on good supplies. The market should continue to drop but more slowly, as Plant City begins to produce good volume in another 10-14days.

## **STONE FRUIT**

There are lighter supplies again this week from Chile as the season quickly winds down. There is still good quality eating fruit in peaches, nectarines and a few red/black plums. Relatively light demand will keep the market steady again this week.

## **TOMATOES**

**Western:** Mexican growers have pulled back a bit on production to get themselves out of the low market they have been in for a month. There are plenty of vine ripe tomatoes to go around but we are seeing less of the gas fruit. There are unstable fobs for round tomatoes. There have been daily price adjustments due to current demand. . Roma tomatoes are very active.

**Eastern:** Tomato production in Florida is lower than Mexico but demand is keeping the playing field level. There has been no major upswing to pricing even with lower production. Cooler weather is slowing production and growth. There is more of the bigger fruit than smaller due to the fact that smaller fruit has been affected by the recent cold temps more so than the larger fruit. Grape tomatoes are starting to get a bit tight.

## **WATERMELONS**

Watermelon supplies in both the seeded and seedless are extremely light again this week. The transition back to Northern Mexico is a difficult one and growers continue to struggle with weather and growth patterns. Demand is strong for limited supplies and the market will remain strong. Although there are light supplies, the quality is still very good.

## **VALUE ADDED**

So far, there have been no issues with raw material used by processors. The high heats in Yuma may change things towards the end of the week, but for now, no big issues exist. Aside from the cleaning of the outer leaves, the raw material has been clean. Good quality continues to be reported on chopped Romaine. Complaints have been minimal on green onions also.