

Commodity Updates

APPLES/PEARS

The push continues on Granny Smith and Fuji Apples. The deals remain in the mid-range sizes (100-113's)* and in the lower grades with ample supplies for promoting! Washington still remains the leading production area for all apples and regional production areas including Michigan and New York are only shipping light supplies of storage apples. Washington and Oregon Pears continue light production from storage including mainly the Anjou and Bosc varieties. Be aware, the Fancy pears are drying up and coming from storage now is mainly #1 fruit for suitable shipping condition.

ASPARAGUS

The market is still strong and supplies from California will be light. Expect prices to remain strong until after the holiday. Mexican production is all but finished. Supplies coming out of California have become much tighter due to the holiday pull and cold night time temperatures.

AVOCADO

Mexican fruit – Mexican supplies are short this week. Supplies look to stay shorter over the next 2 weeks as workers take off for Easter. Demand continues to be very good.

California Fruit - California growers continue to slowly increase their harvest. Look for better supplies as we move through April.

BELL PEPPERS

Western Green Bells and Colored Bells:

With the existing acreage and a few late spring deals, overall volume from Mexico continues to decrease as growers are finishing for the season. Size and quality continue to be a problem. The California desert looks to start the 3rd week of April. Demand is good. Red and yellow bell supplies remain light. One grower out of Baja has started this week. The California desert looks to start mid May.

Eastern Bells: The Florida market on bell peppers is working its way up this week due to better demand and the shift of growing regions. Quality on bells looks good. Market should continue to climb as less pepper is available and the transition North begins.

BERRIES

Strawberries: Strawberry production in California continues to gain momentum with all

Commodities at a glance...

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

Legend

Quality
Excellent
Good
Fair
Poor

Market
Steady
Higher
Lower

Commodity Updates *continued*

growing areas in California now producing. We are anticipating receiving some rain in the California growing areas by Tuesday. If we do get rain this could slow production for the front end of next week. Oxnard and Santa Maria will be the strong spots as Salinas and Watsonville are only producing a couple of pallets a day but are increasing. We are now in the tail end of the Easter pull, and shippers are maintaining their prices. Weather has been good in the growing areas. Driscoll's will be transferring Californian fruit to Florida with a week in advance notice. McAllen crossings are finished.

Raspberries: Raspberry production is very low and will continue to be snug with Mexico encountering hot weather and California just not being up to speed yet. Overall production is close to nothing out of Mexico. We can expect to see orders cut and loading dates to be affected as well. There should be a second push from production by mid April that should increase volume significantly.

Blackberries: Blackberry production is steady with respectfully consistent transfers arriving from Mexico. There continue to be shippers in much better shape than others. We are now looking at local production to increase but are currently dealing with predominantly transferred fruit from Mexico. 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 tremendously from Chile and some shippers are getting higher prices. We are seeing less fruit arriving on vessels, and see the end of boat fruit soon. Most to all Chilean fruit is now airfreight, 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. There are reports of Floridian Blueberries (new crop) now available, but commanding a premium price. We can expect a gap as the Eastern early varieties were affected by early frost damage.

BROCCOLI

This market is softer as more supplies come from the California growing regions. The strong prices have slowed demand tremendously.

Prices will start to soften up through the week. Expect plenty of supplies by the week's end.

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 April. Quality remains good. Georgia has good availability and quality on the East Coast.

CAULIFLOWER

Demand has fallen off as supplies have increased from most shippers. The market is weaker with some shippers offering deals. Supplies look good for the rest of the week. Quality is still fair with some lots showing yellow discoloration.

CELERY

This market is steady in the bigger sized celery. Prices have picked up a little on the smaller sizes. The quality is still very nice with good weights. Demand is also steady. Some shippers have offered deals on 18 and 24 count celery for volume orders.

CITRUS

Lemon: The Central Valley is 90% 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 and 56's. There is limited harvest starting on Valencia's.

CUCUMBERS

Western Cucumber: Northern Mexico has begun to harvest better supplies from their new fields. Volume should continue to increase over the week. Baja has begun with some light production.

Eastern Cucumbers: Florida cucumber crop has yet to be of any significance (still 5-7 days away from good supply, fields stunted from earlier freeze in growing region) Demand is moderate and production is slowly increasing this week. Quality is fair at best on the domestic cucumber crop showing undersized, some scarred, yellowing.

Commodity Updates *continued*

GRAPES

There are still ample supplies of green seedless grapes, but beware of quality! There are lots with problems at shipping point due to lack of movement and limited storage space. Red Seedless (Crimson) grape supplies are better again this week and although there is very strong demand, shippers will be able to keep up without issue. Red Globe and Black Seedless grapes are steady again this week with decent supplies and excellent quality!

GREEN ONIONS

This market will be steady for the front part of the week. But look for prices to increase as the week goes along. Production from Mexico will come to a halt due to the Easter Holiday. The border crossing will shut down on Thursday and will not open back up until Monday. Also there will be no harvest until Monday out of Mexico. Then expect supplies to get back on track late next week.

KIWI

Kiwi supplies remain very good overall and quality is excellent. Italian Kiwi is dominating the market and prices will remain steady into next week.

LEAF LETTUCE

This market is active with all leaf items. Huron and Salinas production has begun, but plantings are limited in both regions. Continue to avoid liner packed product as this will create dehydration. This will allow for better arrivals. Some quality defects continue to include insects, fringe burn, tip burn, and wind burn.

LETTUCE

The lettuce market is extremely active. Supplies are extremely short out of the Huron growing region. Prices are also active. The Salinas growing region is not yet ready for production. Some processors are looking for fields to secure for processing. The yields are not enough to complete production in the processing plants. This is creating the active market on carton lettuce. Many suppliers still have enough volume to cover orders in full. But expect this market to be active throughout the week.

MELONS

Cantaloupes: Cantaloupes remain strong this week as there are only light supplies available. The first of the two remaining Guatemala growing areas of the second cycle will finish up after this week. The more mountainous second area still yet to harvest is experiencing colder, wet weather and there will be lighter supplies over the next 7-14 days overall. The East Coast (Florida) ports are dominating the supply line and the West (L.A.) supplies remain extremely low. Heavy demand pressure will keep the market strong on Cantaloupes this week again. Sugar levels and eating quality remain high.

Honeydews: The market remains strong on honeydews, especially in the larger sized fruit (4/5ct). Only light supplies are available from all ports. Similar to the cantaloupes, supplies will remain very light over the next 7-14 days. Quality remains very good.

ONIONS

Idaho/Oregon will have supplies available through the end of May with limited shippers. Washington looks like they will go through the middle to end of May with supplies as well. The quality is still good, with several shippers now pulling out of their cold storage. Mexican product still available out of Texas with Texas grown onions also available. There are load volume deals on jumbo yellow onions out of Texas. Good supplies of carton Texas 1015's.

POTATOES

Burbanks are now the only varietal available and are running small. The quality is still very good. Wisconsin and Colorado have good supplies and quality. Colored potatoes are loading out of North Dakota and Wisconsin with Washington still with some light supplies. California with good quality but light supplies on some varieties which are getting filled with product out of Washington or Florida.

SQUASH

Western Squash: Mainland Mexico has good volume from new fields in the North. Look for volume and quality for the next several weeks on Italian and Yellow.

Commodity Updates continued

Eastern Squash: A little spread in the Florida the squash market this week. Some cheap deals to be had in Homestead with slightly higher markets in other areas. Quality overall is good but sizing as a bit irregular. Stable market conditions are expected to continue.

STONE FRUIT

Light supplies of stone/tree fruit still remain available and sizing is limited to mainly large fruit. Movement is still decent for the light supplies so the market will remain steady again this week. Quality continues to be very good for this late season fruit. Expect the first California fruit by the end of April. Get ready; this spring is going to be a good one for California tree fruit and cherry supplies look to be abundant.

TOMATOES

Western: Mexican production is steady with plenty of larger sized tomatoes but lacking 6x6 and 6x7 sizes. Pricing has been very inconsistent and has varied from day to day. Color has been a bit of a challenge, but pre-ordering helps avoid issues. Shippers are looking to take fobs up. Roma tomatoes are very tight and look to continue to be for the near future. **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. Early cooler weather had slowed 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. Roma tomatoes are very tight. Grape tomatoes are starting to get a bit tight.

WATERMELONS

Watermelon growers are still struggling. Seedless watermelon supplies remain light and Northern Mexico is still about 7-10 days away from any better supply line. Regular seeded watermelons remain very tight and supplies will not be any better next week. Low yields and unseasonable growing conditions have growers frustrated and low fruit production will continue. Warmer weather is coming and expects supplies to be getting better within the next one to two weeks.

VALUE ADDED

Broccoli processors are still having a tough time filling orders and they are holding customers to weekly averages. The lettuce supplies are extremely short. This will have a direct affect on the quality of finished product. Harvesting crews are way ahead of fields harvesting younger lettuce. This is not helping the yields in the plant. So lettuce processors are out purchasing extra fields to help meet the demand. Good quality continues to be reported on chopped Romaine. Complaints have been minimal on green onions also.

WEATHER CONTINUED

In the Southeast a very active and unsettled weather pattern will remain in place following this past week's heavy precipitation. A series of short waves are lined up to sweep through the region this week bringing additional chance of rainfall to already saturated area. A cold front expected Tuesday will bring winds, cold temperatures (with a chance of frost Tuesday night) along with a chance of showers as it moves through. Gradual warming takes place following this system as another warmer system brings another chance of rain late this week. This pattern of lighter precipitation is a welcome relief from recent heavy rains that have many area river systems at or near flood stage.

