



# Produce Update

January 20, 2012  
LLC

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Cantaloupe and Honeydew are still extremely limited into next week

Weather is improving in most growing areas with temperatures becoming more seasonal

Light Freeze in the Florida Strawberry growing areas last night has slowed harvest numbers again today. Rain is in the forecast for Wednesday

Markets are unsettled because of holiday and weather interruptions last week. It has now temporally affected a good portion of the available commodities. Production and availability ought to improve next week and thereafter



### Weather:

A series of Pacific storms entering Northern California today will bring rain to much of California beginning Thursday likely impacting the Southwestern growing regions over the weekend. High pressure currently in place over the southwest will keep the region clear and dry until the weekend when the storm track breaks down the ridge. A couple more cold mornings are on tap for the desert area growers ahead of these systems with daytime highs in the low to mid 70s through the period. Forecasts expect these systems to impact these desert locals with light to moderate precipitation into next week. These cold powerful storm systems are a welcome relief for California having received no rain since November.



### Freight:

Trucks in California will be steady this week. Washington, Eastern, and Western Idaho trucks have loosened up. Crude oil continues to be near 100 dollars a barrel and is currently at \$100.02. The National Average for diesel remained steady last week and is currently at 3.854 per gallon.



# Commodity Updates

## APPLES/PEARS

Many Eastern variety's are still more limited because the regular storage only shippers are finished packing but the market is the steady. Washington Reds are still producing mostly size 88/100's that have high color so expect the lower grades to remain limited. Golden Delicious is also heavy to 88/100's and the higher grades. Many shippers have less Golden's this year. Granny-Smith is also packing out with more 88/100's and they are also heavy extra-fancy grade. Galas are still peaking on 88's and smaller and are also producing more of the extra-fancy grades. Gala demand remains strong along with the market. Washington Honey Crisp is peaking on 88/100's but the availability is low as most shippers will finish them by the end of the month. Cameos, Pink Lady's, Jonagolds, Fuji's, Braeburns and the other varieties are all still available. Washington Bartletts are heavy to the US#1 grade and are peaking on 100's and smaller but the availability is light. Most packers will finish Bartlett Pears in February. D 'Anjou pears are also peaking on the US#1 grade and are evenly spread across the size spectrum. Washington Bosc pears are peaking on 100/110's and smaller and the availability is good right now. Red D'Anjou and Stark Crimson red pears are also still available.

## ASPARAGUS

This market is softer. Supplies out of Mexico have picked up on small, standard and large sizing. Extra large and jumbo sizes will continue to be light throughout the week. Peruvian product continues to have extra large and jumbos available if needed. The Peruvian product loads in Florida and LA.

## AVOCADO

Mexico harvest will be good and steady as we move through the week. Market is firm and looks to stay this way until after the Super Bowl pull concludes. Chile's volume coming to the US is slowly increasing.

## BELL PEPPERS

### **Western: Green Bells and Colored Bells:**

Bell pepper (green) production is improving. Production is shifting towards smaller/choice fruit with lighter supplies on big fruit. Colored bells improving in supplies. Conventional

## Commodities at a glance...

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Market</u>
Apples	Excellent	Steady
Asparagus	Good	Lower
Avocado (Mexican)	Excellent	Steady
Avocado (Chilean)	Excellent	Steady
Bell Peppers (Western)	Good	Steady
Bell Pepper (Eastern)	Good	Steady
Berries: Strawberries	Good	Higher
Berries: Raspberries	Good	Steady
Berries: Blackberries	Good	Higher
Berries: Blueberries	Excellent	Steady
Broccoli	Good	Steady
Carrots	Good	Higher
Cauliflower	Fair	Lower
Celery	Good	Higher
Citrus: Lemons	Good	Steady
Citrus: Oranges	Good	Steady
Cucumbers (Western)	Good	Steady
Cucumbers (Eastern)	Good	Steady
Eggplant	Good	Steady
Red Grapes	Good	Steady
Green Onions	Fair	Higher
Lettuce: Leaf	Fair	Higher
Lettuce: Iceberg	Fair	Steady
Melons: Cantaloupe	Excellent	Higher
Melons: Honeydew	Excellent	Higher
Onions	Excellent	Steady
Pears	Excellent	Steady
Potatoes	Good	Steady
Squash (Western)	Good	Steady
Squash (Eastern)	Good	steady
Stone Fruit	n/a	n/a
Tomatoes (Western)	Good	Steady
Tomatoes (Eastern)	Fair	Steady
Watermelon	Good	Steady

# Commodity Updates continued

colored bells are increasing in production. Market is settling down on open field bells and is getting to normal production schedules.

## **Eastern Bells:**

The pepper market in Florida has remained quite strong after the recent freeze. However, with ample volume, good quality, and pepper crossing out west, we should see this market begin to trend downward in the coming days.

## **BERRIES**

**Strawberries:** Freezing temperatures hit a few of the Florida strawberry growing areas this morning. Water was ran for a few hours which will slow down harvest again today. Demand is very good with light supplies. Quality is being reported as fair to good. California strawberry supplies are beginning to tighten up as the continuing cold weather reduces the daily harvest estimates. The forecast is calling for some more rain coming in this weekend. Demand is also good with light supplies and a firm market. Quality is being reported as good on the spring crop and fair to good on the fall crop. The market is firm. Retailers are driving the market higher currently.

**Raspberries:** Quality remains good with improving demand and lighter supplies due to the continuing cold weather. The market is steady but shows signs of firming up.

**Blackberries:** Quality remains good to fair with moderate supplies and a firmer market.

**Blueberries:** All growers have switched to 6oz packs and larger. The market is steady to slightly firmer. Retail Ad's are driving the market currently. Quality is being reported as good.

## **BROCCOLI**

Supplies are strong on bunched product as well as crowns, and suppliers are looking to move volume at discounted pricing. Overall, pricing is steady. Warmer weather in the growing regions has increased supplies. Availability is expected to be good throughout the week. There continues to be supplies available in Scottsdale if the need arises.

## **CARROTS**

California carrot supplies remain good, but with the cooler winter weather growth is slowing sizing and volumes on the jumbo size carrots are beginning to lighten and market is firming.

## **CAULIFLOWER**

This market is softer. Lack of demand has allowed some suppliers to have higher than normal inventories. Good supplies are in the sixteen counts and offers are being listened to by most shippers. Growers are continuing to deal with brown spotting and yields have been affected. The overall quality has been fair.

## **CELERY**

This market is active on all packs. Better availability continues with 30 and 36 count sizing. Santa Maria as well as Oxnard and Yuma are the main areas of production on this commodity. The quality is good with no major issues to report at this time. Large sizing is still commanding a higher price.

## **CITRUS**

**Lemons:** Supply and demand is about equal on most sizes. Quality is good.

**Oranges:** The Navels are in full production. Quality looks very nice and fruit is now full natural color. Pack outs are running heavy to fancy grades.

**Limes:** Supplies expected tighter with weather in the growing areas. Demand continues on 110's-200's resulting in a rising market.

## **CUCUMBERS**

### **Western Cucumber:**

Lighter supplies across the board. Market is creeping up as demand exceeds current availability. As weather and harvesting gets back on track, availability ought to steady the market. We foresee relief next couple of weeks.

### **Eastern Cucumbers: *Janine Baird***

The cucumber market remains active in Florida. With less acreage planted in Central America this year and delays at the ports, supplies will be tight and prices high throughout the week.

## **EGGPLANT**

### **Western Eggplant:**

Supplies are stabilizing this week. Market is steady.

### **Eastern Eggplant:**

This market has remained steady and should continue to do so for the next week or so as supplies out of Florida increase and quality is excellent.

# Commodity Updates continued

## **GRAPES:**

Chilean fruit is coming in to both coasts with good quality. The red and green grapes are both very small still mostly 9/16 to 10/16. The market is very soft as there is plenty of fruit with little demand.

## **GREEN ONIONS**

This market is stronger. Supplies are light to moderate with most shippers. The quality continues to have a few issues with decay upon arrival. Pencil sizing will have the best availability. Supplies are expected to be light to moderate for the rest of the week.

## **LEAF LETTUCE**

The romaine market is up. Blister and peel continues to be a problem with all suppliers. This is an industry wide issue. Demand is better. Yields continue to be down with all suppliers. Thirty count packs are being done from some suppliers in hopes of having a cleaner pack. Blister, tip burn and epidermal peel are issues we will be dealing with for the next couple of weeks. Green and red leaf will have similar issue as romaine, but not as drastic. This market is up as well. The main growing area is in Yuma. The Thermal area has picked up in production numbers. Supplies out of Santa Maria are light in availability.

## **LETTUCE**

The lettuce market continues on a steady path. Supplies are good with most suppliers. Epidermal peel and blister continues to be seen upon arrivals, but the frequency is less. Lettuce carton weights are averaging 46-48 #s. The availability is good and demand is light.

## **MELONS:**

**Cantaloupe:** Demand exceeds supplies. Offshore fruit is extremely limited. Honduras is extremely limited with fewer boats coming in with fruit then is typical for this time period. Product this week and into next will continue to be limited so getting orders in early is advised. Quality is very good and the market is up. Mexican fruit is done for the season.

**Honeydew:** Offshore more limited on dews than Cantaloupe. Mexican fruit is extremely limited also. Very good quality and mostly 6's available for what little fruit is out there. Quality is good.

## **ONIONS**

Washington, Oregon, and Idaho are all steady to lower on red and yellow onions. The supplies in the northwest are good for both colors and the demand has been fair. Most northwest shippers will still deal for volume. Texas is still crossing a few Mexican sweets and a few sacks medium and jumbo yellows. The Mexican product is also steady to lower. Yellow quality has been excellent in the northwest. White supplies are fairly limited but steady along with the market in all areas.

## **POTATOES**

Norkotahs are limited in Idaho right now because only a couple shippers are packing them. The norkotahs that are getting packed are smaller too so less 60 counts and larger and more 70-100's. Most Idaho packers are running Burbanks and they are also smaller, so expect the larger count market to stay strong in the short-term. Idaho is still peaking on 70-count and smaller Burbanks. The Washington market is steady on all sizes and they continue to peak on the larger counts. Colorado's market is also steady and they are peaking on 70-count and larger. Russet quality has been excellent in all areas. Bakersfield, California is still packing reds, golds, and whites and pricing is steady but the availability remains questionable due to skinning. Washington & North Dakota continue packing reds and golds and both areas are heavier to A-size. Gold supplies are limited in both areas. Wisconsin is also packing reds, whites, and golds and their market is also flat but whites and golds are limited. Idaho is still packing reds and golds and they are also peaking on A-size. Quality has been fair to excellent in all areas.

## **SQUASH**

### **Western Squash:**

Markets are very unsettled due to gaps in harvesting as a result of previous cold snap. Demand exceeds current availability and we foresee some relief until the end of this week. It will take a while for pipeline to replenish.

### **Eastern Squash:**

The freeze from several days ago has taken its toll on Florida squash and current cool temps are not helping the situation. With minimal volume available out of the West, we are in a

# Commodity Updates *continued*

demand exceeds supply situation. Volume will remain extremely limited this week and into next week. Markets and supplies will be determined day to day.

## **STONE FRUIT**

Offshore fruit is available with limited supplies on both the west and east coast on nectarines, peaches, plums and cherries.

## **TOMATOES**

**Western:** With crossings increasing at Nogales, AZ & McAllen, TX, it appears that Mexican product is presently or will soon be supplying the western portion of the United States with tomatoes. FOB prices have decreased & with cheaper freight, most wholesalers & repackers are making this choice. Quality is good & weather in the Mexican interior is temperate.

**Eastern:** While the volume in the Immokalee/Naples area in Florida has definitely decreased, post-holiday movement continues to be sluggish and there continues to be unsold loads at shipping point, which is having the effect of decreased prices across the board. Quality continues to be good, however, and the Midwest and Eastern houses should continue to take Florida product through the end of the month, possibly longer.

## **WATERMELON:**

Markets steady to slightly lower. Current availability on Seedless watermelons is heavier towards 4ct as most are now receiving from Jalisco. We are experiencing a small flush. Anticipate some gaps as small flush takes its course and affects next week and the following week's production. Seeded watermelon will be available in light supplies as Jalisco gears up.

## **VALUE ADDED**

The lettuce supplies are much stronger with all suppliers. Romaine supplies will be moderate, but quality will be suspect. Broccoli supplies are strong. The cauliflower supplies have picked up with most suppliers so availability will not be an issue. Expect all value - added products to have less of a shelf life, due to weaker raw material being used. Although warmer weather has occurred in the growing regions, past frigid temperatures have still

played havoc on the growth of most produce items. The evenings currently in the desert continue to drop in the 30s.