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*** THE A & Z MARKET REPORT ***

A Weekly Produce Report for Our Produce Buyers

February 1, 2010



GENERAL OUTLOOK: Western growing fields have been drying out over the past week and have had a positive impact on quality and production. However, by Wednesday costal rains will return and again cause harvesting problems through the balance of the week. **STRAWBERRIES** continue to be affected the most because rain easily damages the outer skin and weakens the condition and integrity of the fruit. (In the industry, this is usually referred to as rain damage.) Excess rain almost always has a short term negative effect on fruits and vegetables. However the long term positive effects far outweigh the negatives.

*** TIGHT ITEMS ***



CELERY: It is very unusual to have Celery in the \$40 range--especially for weeks at a time. With Florida recovering from the recent freeze, more production will gradually be added to the supply picture and prices should weaken. California growers haven't seen such constant high Celery prices for a very long time, if ever.

YELLOW SQUASH: It is unusual to have such a plethora of Zucchini and such a shortage of Yellow Squash. However, Yellow is almost four times the cost of Italian.

ARTICHOKES: Supplies are very limited and expensive with just fair quality.

WATERMELONS: Very little Mexican supply is available and pricing is extremely high. There is one thing for sure and that is next year at this time, there will a big excess of supply as growers always over react in the season following a very strong, high profit market and over plant.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS: The first flush of Mexican Bells is finishing along with recent rains and now cooler temperatures. These all add up to a stronger market and higher pricing.

*** PROMOTIONAL ITEMS ***

LITEHOUSE DRESSINGS/DIPS: Litehouse is offering SUPER BOWL week promotions for those retailers willing to discount and push their product line this week. Talk to one of our sales associates for more information.

LEAF: There are plenty of RED, GREEN and ROMAINE at promotional pricing. Recent rains followed by days of sunshine are resulting in excess supplies....and deals!

C h e c k O u t A Z P r o d u c e . n e t f o r S o m e G r e a t R e c i p e s !

BROCCOLI: Buyers need to careful not to over buy because Broccoli shelf life is not as strong as it was before the rains. Excess rain cause little pockets of moisture to accumulate on Broccoli heads. If it rains again before these water pockets evaporate, problems start developing. Eventually, small decay spots develop which are called “cat eyes”. It usually requires excessive rain, like the recent storms, for this condition to develop. Therefore, be careful to only buy as you need and don’t buy ahead.

CAULIFLOWER: Rains followed by dry, sunny days stimulate plant growth. For now, it is a buyer’s market as growers try to move extra inventories.

LEMONS: Better supplies have pushed prices lower.

LETTUCE: Recent rains followed by sunny days are resulting in heavy production this week. Lower pricing is aimed at producing more demand. By mid week, new loads of jumbo Lettuce will be in our market at promotional pricing as growers try to keep up with their fields.

ZUCCHINI SQUASH: Excessive production has brought pricing to the floor.



TOMATOES: New fields in Mexico are producing big time! Even with the additional demand (created by the Florida freeze), Mexican Tomato prices on most varieties are near the low end. Roma, Grape and large round two layer packs are all at promotional levels. Call for details.

***** FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES *****

DOLE BANANAS: Good supplies continue to be available from Ecuador. Color has been a concern as some shipments have had problems arriving on schedule. Book ahead to assure the color you need!

PEARS: BOSCH, RED and D’ANJOU PEARS are still selling well and are an attractively priced fruit item to feature this week.

YELLOW ONIONS: Good storage supplies continue to be available although pricing is higher. The first new crop Chilean SWEETS have come in, but are very expensive. We continue to stock the less expensive, stickered Northwest SWEET ONIONS, too. Quality continues to be good on most storage packs.

AVOCADOS: The Super Bowl Avocado promotions this week highlight the highest demand week of the year for this popular fruit. We have plenty of supplies for your weekend party needs. Call for details.

CANTALOUPE: Honduran 9s and 12s are available this week at lower pricing.

GRAPES: Production of Chilean Seedless continues to increase resulting in lower pricing this week.



IDAHO POTATOES: Cold weather has kept some Idaho POTATO sheds from packing last week, but supplies should be plentiful this week. We have plenty of RUSSETS in 5#, 10#, 15# and 20# retail packs. Count BAKERS are still an excellent value, too. We have promotable 20# REDS and YELLOW YUKON GOLDS for Tuesday. Quality has been good and prices continue to be cheap, cheap, cheap!