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## \*\*\* THE A & Z MARKET REPORT \*\*\*

*A Weekly Produce Report for Our Produce Buyers*

July 19, 2010



**GENERAL OUTLOOK:** There was a substantial heat wave that passed through California last week, but cooler temperatures are returning for the rest of this week. The San Joaquin Valley, where CORN, CANTALOUPEs, GRAPES and STONE FRUITS are being harvested, experienced triple digit temperatures into the mid teens. Not only does this damage the product, but it also limits the hours that it is wise to keep harvesting crews working in the heat. Excessive high temperatures also hinder growth rates as well as product quality. The bottom line is that most upcoming crops will likely be affected in regards to yields, quality, texture and shelf life. Another problem with excessive heat is that fields tend to bunch up leaving the possibility of future shortages and gaps as the harvest continues.

### \*\*\* TIGHT ITEMS \*\*\*



**COLORED & GREEN BELL PEPPERS:** The GREEN market remains tight with Bakersfield winding down and the northern district slow in starting. The volume of REDS is improving--but not enough to allow pricing under \$30. GOLD and ORANGE bell pricing remains firm too.

**RUSSET POTATOES:** Idaho spuds are higher priced. Overall demand has increased dramatically on all sizes because many other growing areas around the country have finished for the season. Demand exceeds supply on most COUNT BAKERS and 5# and 10# POLY retail bags. Idaho is finally seeing increased demand for their small profile potatoes that they have been selling at below packing costs for 8 months. The new crop NORKOTAHS will be 2-3 weeks late from normal harvest times due to the slow start in planting and growth from the wet and cool spring. This condition will make an already tight market even shorter in supply. The age old adage of supply and demand create the price is no truer that now as the growers/packers with the supply are going to get the best price of the storage season. In contrast, last year the grower/packer that held onto spuds for the late market lost out because of a cheap late market and poor quality/shelf life of the storage potatoes. It truly is a gamble or "roll of the dice" to decide how much to grow and when to sell.

**ASPARAGUS:** This market is very, very firm and pricing is through the roof. Peru is experiencing cold weather and Mexico has had rain.. With very limited domestic production, supplies are tight. No change is expected for several weeks.

**CANTALOUPEs:** We saw this coming last week. As we transition to new fields in the San Joaquin Valley, production is not as heavy as it was in the southern districts. Because there is not enough fruit to meet demand at promotional price levels, higher price adjusting is taking place. We only expect this shortage to be temporary--until the Westside District gets into full harvest mode.

**ICEBERG LETTUCE:** Typical lower summer plantings on top of adverse growing conditions and increased eastern demand have pushed pricing higher on the limited supplies with only marginal quality. Irregular head sizing and light weights are the current concerns.



**GRAPES:** Two weeks ago it was projected that new California RED FLAMES would be in much higher volume this week. However, this has not happened. The above mentioned heat wave has pushed this back at least a week. With the cheaper Mexican deal quickly ending, this market is firm. New crop California GREEN SEEDLESS volume is also slow is starting too. With many ads already in place this week, we might not see realistic upward market adjusting until next week.

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\*\*\* PROMOTIONAL ITEMS \*\*\*



**CALIFORNIA PEACHES:** A plethora of Peaches are available at bottom end pricing. Shippers are making deals to move extra volume in all sizes and packs. The new 'SWEET DREAM' variety is coming on in strength. This variety is high colored and very sweet. We will be stocking both a large tray pack and a volume fill pack. Peaches are, by far, the best value in stone fruit.

**CAULIFLOWER:** Supplies are not as heavy as broccoli but sufficient enough to have pricing in promotional range.

**CARROTS:** This market remains steady. Carrots are almost always a safe bet for promotional consideration. The 1# , 2# and 5# CELLO packs are a good suggestion for the coming week.

**BROCCOLI:** Heavy volume has pushed prices to the bottom. Great deals on bunch and crown packs are available. Call for details.



**LITE HOUSE DIPS & DRESSINGS:** A 'family ad' starts this week which makes all packs and sizes available at promotional pricing. Call for details and pricing.

**LIMES:** Prices are about as low as we have seen recently. With the lemon market starting to climb, high quality Mexican limes are a great value and an exceptional promotional opportunity.

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

**BANANAS:** Dole imports from Ecuador have stabilized for now. However, with eight active volcanoes in this small country, things can change in a hurry. We are bringing in a premium Mexican banana at lower pricing to help offset the sporadic inventories from Dole.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Peak production has been hit in the Watsonville/Salinas areas and numbers will continue to decrease, keeping this market firm. Cool, wet mornings have also hindered production. Sizing is on the medium size but quality has been good.

**CUCUMBERS:** This market is steady at current levels. Mainland Mexico is still producing as well as Baja

**GREEN ONIONS:** Recent storms in Mexico have reduced production and pushed prices higher. Quality continues to be nice.

**LEMONS:** Increasing demand has pushed pricing higher and will continue to do so until the end of August.

**ORANGES:** Beautiful Late NAVELS continue to be available again this week. Valencias are also available as a less expensive alternative. Both varieties are very nice. Now is the time to buy if you want to stock up on these high quality late Navels.

**CELERY:** Oxnard production has ended which leaves Santa Maria and Salinas as the main producing areas. The 24-size is in good volume and also lower priced than the smaller sizes. Quality remains nice.



**CHERRIES:** Product is being harvested locally as well as in Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Prices are somewhat cheaper, but the demand for good large sweet red CHERRIES is still strong. With much of the strongest fruit going to the East Coast, prices are firm on the best lots. Conversely, a small local grower that does NOT have a food safety program and adequate cooling capability in food safety approved containers may sell their product for a cheaper price. This is the type of fruit one sees at local "farmers markets" and road side stands. These growers know what their quality is like and sell it accordingly. We buy and handle fruit from independent third party safety inspected reputable growers/shippers that will back us and our loyal customers IF there is ever a food safety issue. Buy with confidence and with peace of mind for you and the ultimate consumers.