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

A Weekly Produce Report for Our Produce Buyers

February 6, 2012



GENERAL OUTLOOK: A low pressure system will travel eastward through California on Tuesday bringing rain to most growing regions north of Santa Barbara and Bakersfield. The STRAWBERRY fields to the south should remain dry. To the southeast, desert growing regions in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys as well as Yuma, AZ will remain dry and in full production. Further south in Mexico, rain is expected on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and will most likely disrupt TOMATO harvesting. This is Mother Nature's way of reducing supply. This will also allow ground vegetable markets to stabilize.

*** TIGHT ITEMS ***



HONEYDEWS: Great demand but limited supplies have kept prices sky high. Central American (also called "off-shore") production is very limited—less than cantaloupe production. Most 'dews are pre-sold--days before vessels arrive. Even with Mexico still sending a few melons north, this market will remain tight. Some importers "hope" to have better availability soon to help satisfy the strong demand. Growers are redirecting as many melons as possible to the U.S. to take advantage of this high market.

CANTALOUPE: The market is still strong, but it is easing slightly. Increasing import supplies to the West Coast this week from Central America will help prices adjust. Improving supplies will help fulfill demand, resulting in slightly lower prices. Quality is very good.

BANANAS: Inconsistent supplies continue to keep this market active. All importers are pro-rating contract numbers and raising prices where and when they can. A 1,000,000 box variance is the result of a 30% shortfall. (Demand is up by 15%, but production is off by 15%.) Erratic arrivals and uneven maturity levels are the result. Thus, we suggest that you stay ahead on color!

ZUCCHINI & YELLOW SQUASHES: Supplies from Mexico are slowly improving. Lower prices will be the net result of better volume. Quality is improving too.

*** PROMOTIONAL ITEMS ***

ICEBERG LETTUCE: If you are a desert grower, this is a terrible market. If you are a buyer, winter prices have not been this low in years. Optimum growing conditions have made for high yields. Quality is now exceptional with good weights, medium to large head size and firm solidity. Because current demand is so light and supplies good, low prices will continue for at least another week or more.

BROCCOLI: Strong supplies of BUNCH and CROWN packs should be a boon for consumers. High quality and low prices for the next two weeks are available. Call for details!

CAULIFLOWER: This market continues to be depressed. Little demand, much inventory and low prices are now commonplace. Quality has been the only real issue, and shippers are now harvesting just the better lots.



ASPARAGUS: Increasing Mexican production has made this springtime commodity very attractive. High quality, larger size packs (28-lbs.) are priced to move. Call for details! (DID YOU KNOW? Even though asparagus was used as food in ancient Egypt, it did not really arrive to America until after the Civil War—and didn't become popular until the late 1800s. It was then considered to be a European delicacy and was much sought after by the American "nouveau riche"—new rich.)

Check Out AZProduce.net for Some Great Recipes!

THE A & Z MARKET REPORT (continued)



STRAWBERRIES: California Shippers are reporting much better demand as the Valentine's Day pull begins. The cool December has reinvigorated the plants, which should result in excellent volume now. Recent ideal growing conditions have pushed production well ahead of last year's pace. (As of January 26th: **1.5 million flats vs 259,000.**) Expected rain in Florida and Mainland Mexico, affecting the harvest and the quality of fruit, may vex shippers in these berry producing areas. California's weather appears to be much nicer causing more focus on the Golden State for supplies. Size and quality are excellent.

Please note: Some deal pricing will continue this week WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. Call for details!

NAVEL ORANGES: Recent cooler temperatures in the California citrus regions have made for better color and firmer rind. However, the remaining **50% to 60%** of the crop will suffer a little in size. Stronger demand for larger sizes (56s/larger) will firm prices. Fortunately, 72-size supplies are adequate and attractively priced. (Note: California citrus growers continue to grapple with water issues. Impending regulations and little rainfall this season—**54% behind normal**—may impact growers in the future.)

MANGOS: Peruvian imports are increasing just as the Ecuadorian season is winding down. Better supplies will mean better prices too.

BELL PEPPERS: Heavy GREEN production in Mexico has forced prices even lower. Sizing is large and quality is good. Absolutely gorgeous hot house RED, GOLD and ORANGE bells have arrived. Rarely have we seen such great value and quality in these **11-lbs.** packs. Call for details!

TOMATOES: Mexico continues to produce high volumes of Large ROUNDS, GRAPES and ROMAS. With their season expected to peak in mid-March, tomatoes should be attractive for the near future. Mexico is sending about twice as many greenhouse-grown packs as field-grown packs to the U.S. Please call!

SEEDLESS WATERMELONS: Improving production in Southern Mexico is more than matching demand, weakening this market. Value priced PERSONAL MINIS are again available. Call for details!

POTATOES: Steady supplies, quality and prices in Idaho—especially on large count bakers!

DRY ONIONS: Northwest storage RED and YELLOW supplies are plentiful but demand is only light. Prices are low because shippers want to move more volume. The WHITE market is steady.

PINT BLUEBERIES: Increasing supplies from Chile have caused a temporary over supply situation on this popular berry. Call today for pricing on the larger PINT packages.

LIME: These popular green beauties are still attractively priced on both 175 and 200 count sizes.

*** FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES ***

BLACKBERRIES: Good demand but erratic supplies from Mexico have caused havoc with this market. Look for decreased pricing this week.

RASPBERRIES: Normal volume, sizing and quality are anticipated this month in Mexico. However, prices have spiked this week because of high Valentine's Day demand.



PINEAPPLES: High quality Mexican GOLDS are in abundant supply and priced attractively. Costa Rica has experienced some adverse weather issues, reducing harvest volume and boosting prices. Overall quality from both areas is superb.

AVOCADOS: This market should remain steady to slightly lower now that the huge Super Bowl pull is over. (The California Avocado Commission claims that **8 million pounds** of fresh avos were mashed into guacamole just for the big game!) Volume will now adjust to steady demand. Mexico and Chile will continue to be the main sources for the near future even though California is just starting in a light way.

LEAF LETTUCES: There is much less evidence of past freezes as quality continues to improve.

CHILEAN IMPORTS: We are in the peak of the Chilean season as nice quality RED and GREEN SEEDLESS GRAPES are plentiful. The growing regions are moving from the north to the south where size and quality are better. PEACHES, NECTARINES, PLUMS and small AVOCADOS are all available too.