



**ADAMS**  
A Fresh Produce Distributor



## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009

When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it - but all that had gone before.

-Jacob Riis

### MARKET REPORT

#### ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS VOLATILE, PRICES UP

Raspberry	Iceberg Lettuce	Boston Lettuce	Serrano Peppers	Red/Green Leaf Lettuce
	Yellow/White Corn	Red Fresno Peppers	Poblano Peppers	Tomatillo

#### ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS GOING DOWN/STEADY

Blackberry	Blueberry	Strawberry	Asparagus	Cauliflower
	Celery	C/T Green Beans	Broccoli	Watermelon
Red Grapes	Pineapple	Cantaloupe	Honeydew	Potatoes B Red
				Russet Potatoes

#### BRIX READINGS TABLE

CANTALOUPE 12ct	10.5	GOOD
CANTALOUPE 15ct	11	GOOD
HONEYDEW	8	AVERAGE
PINEAPPLE	14	GOOD
RED GRAPE	18	EXCELLENT
GREEN GRAPE	18	EXCELLENT
STRAWBERRIES	10	AVERAGE
RASPBERRIES	12	AVERAGE
BBLACKBERRIES	11	AVERAGE
BLUEBERRIES	14	GOOD

Within a given species of plant, the crop with a higher refractive index will have higher sugar content, higher mineral content, and higher protein content. This adds up to a sweeter tasting, more mineral-nutritious food with a lower nitrate and water content and better storage characteristics. As a broad generalization, produce over 12 Brix is considered good



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### MARKET REPORT CONTINUED

#### **APPLES/PEARS**

Lower grade (light colored) Red Delicious Apples remain tight. Demand continues strong for the smaller sized lower grade reds and there are deals available in the varieties, so please take a look. Continue to promote Granny Smith and Fuji Apples in the small and mid-range sizes as deals are available there as well. 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 are mainly #1 fruit for suitable shipping condition.

#### **ASPARAGUS**

This market continues to be very tight. Mexican production is finished. California production is light due to cold temperatures in the growing regions. Expect availability to be light through the front part of this week.

#### **AVOCADO**

**Mexican fruit** – Mexican supplies remain short this week. Supplies look to stay shorter through the week and into next week as Mexico regains production after Easter. Mexico is currently supplying the bulk of the avocados on the market. This reduction in supply is driving the market upward. Demand continues to be very good.

#### **BELL PEPPERS**

**Eastern Bells:** As post holiday demand drops off, the bell pepper market has weakened just a bit. Most of the dealing is in the smaller sizes and off grades, but by the end of the week, the market on all sizes should be softer. Central Florida should also be into volume by the weekend, causing even more of a drop.

#### **BERRIES**

- **Strawberries:** Strawberry production in California production this week is starting strong, having all growing areas in California now producing Oxnard and Santa Maria will be the strong spots as Salinas and Watsonville are producing less volume than Oxnard/Santa Maria. We can expect to see more volume out of Salinas/Watsonville by the second week of May. There are some aggressive fob's to start the week. Weather forecast looks good with mild to warm, consistent outlook for the week. Driscoll's will be transferring Californian fruit to Florida with a week in advance notice.
- **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 soft. There is excellent availability on carton and crown product in the Salinas Valley. In the Santa Maria region, production is also strong. Expect pricing to be competitive throughout the week.

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

#### **CAULIFLOWER**

The combination of lower demand and increased production has made this commodity soft in the marketplace. This market will continue to be soft throughout most of the week. Supplies look to be strong for rest of the week out of the Salinas valley.

#### **CELERY**

This market continues to be steady. Smaller sizing continues to be less in production compared to the larger sizing. The quality is still very nice with good weights. Demand is also steady. Shippers are willing to make deals for large orders containing the 18-24 counts.



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### MARKET REPORT CONTINUED

#### 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.
- **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

**Eastern Cucumbers:** The cucumber market is dropping fast in Florida as domestic supplies become more readily available. Central Florida should be in decent supply in another few days and we can continue to see a declining cucumber market in that time. Quality has improved from fair to good.

#### GRAPES

Green Seedless grapes continue strong as we start the week! Regular shipments of short term storage Thompson green seedless grapes are on the decline and long storage greens will start to be the predominant grape. There are regular storage green seedless grapes with issues at shipping point due to lack of movement and limited storage space. Red Seedless (Crimson) grape supplies are still decent but they are off the floor and rising as there are now only about 4+ weeks left of Chilean red grape arrivals. Red Globe and Black Seedless grape prices will continue steady into next week with light supplies and only limited movement. Overall grape quality remains very good.

#### GREEN ONIONS

This market has remained steady. There is a possibility this market could get stronger by the end of the week as Mexico production will be lighter. Variables like the boarder closing and less workers available could make this market more active. The quality continues to be good.

#### KIWI

Kiwi quality remains excellent and movement is steady. The market will remain steady well into next week.

#### LEAF LETTUCE

This market is stable to start the week. Both Salinas and Huron are in production with supplies only moderate. Packing without liner is still suggested to assure better arrivals on quality. Some quality defects that have been reported include insects, fringe burn, tip burn, and wind burn.

#### LETTUCE

The lettuce market has remained stable compared to the end of last week. Supplies are extremely short out of the Huron growing region due to this commodity's inability to size up properly. Salinas has begun production with a few growers. The production numbers are light, however. 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. Most suppliers still have enough volume to cover orders in full.

#### MELONS

- **Cantaloupes:** Cantaloupes remain relatively strong again this week, but demand will tell the ultimate tale if the market will hold at the current levels. There are still only light supplies and sporadic size availability. Small sizes have tightened up and could remain tight for the remainder of the offshore deal. The first of the two remaining Guatemala growing areas of the second cycle will finish up after this week. The more mountainous, second growing area coming into harvest is experiencing colder, wet weather and will net lighter supplies over the next 7-14 days. Finishing up the season, Honduras will also be light and could keep the market stronger until the end. The East Coast (Florida) ports continue to dominate the supply line and the West (L.A.) supplies remain extremely low with very little direct vessel shipments. Sugar levels and eating quality remain high.
- **Honeydews:** The market remains level to start the week with both light demand and supply on honeydews. Similar to the cantaloupes, supplies will remain very light over the next 7-14 days. Quality remains very good.

#### ONIONS

Most Idaho/Oregon shippers are finishing up this week. We will a couple of shippers with product out of Oregon area through the end of May. 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 is still available out of Texas along with Texas grown onions. There are load volume deals on Texas jumbo yellow onions and good supplies of carton Texas 1015's. Vidalia's are set to get started next week.

#### POTATOES

Burbank's are now the only varieties 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.



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### MARKET REPORT CONTINUED

#### **SQUASH**

**Eastern Squash:** There remains a spread in the squash market with the cheap deals to be had in Homestead. The higher markets are farther north but the quality there is superior, as it is new, fresh crops. The market should even out by the end of the week and tend to be at the lower end.

#### **TOMATOES**

**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 a greater quantity of the bigger fruit than smaller due to the smaller fruit being affected by the recent cold temps more than the larger fruit. Roma tomatoes are very tight. Grape tomatoes are continuing to be a bit tight.

#### **WATERMELONS**

Watermelon supplies are better again this week and demand is off. Seedless watermelon supplies still remain relatively light but Northern Mexico growers are able to cross more fruit into Nogales and Texas each day. Demand is light again to start this week, so that will continue to help ease the pressure on available supplies. Warmer weather trends are on the way and expect supplies to be getting better within the next one to two weeks.

#### **VALUE ADDED**

The lettuce supplies are extremely short. Processors are acquiring larger amounts of acreage due to the smaller heads of lettuce being harvested. This will have a direct affect on the quality of finished product. Harvesting crews are way ahead of fields harvesting younger lettuce. Good quality continues to be reported on chopped Romaine. Complaints have been minimal on green onions also.



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### *PRODUCE SPOTLIGHT*

## **Ramps and Wild Leeks**

*A unique and delicious Spring jewel*



The ramp, sometimes called wild leek, is a wild onion native to North America. Though the bulb resembles that of a scallion, the beautiful flat, broad leaves set it apart," the word ramp comes from "rams," or "ramson," an Elizabethan dialect rendering of the wild garlic. The word is first mentioned in English print in 1530, but was used earlier by English immigrants of the southern Appalachian Mountains.

Ramps grow from South Carolina to Canada, and in many areas they're considered a spring delicacy and even a reason for celebration. West Virginia is well-known for their many festivals and events in celebration of the ramp. The flavor and odor of ramps is usually compared to a combination of onions and garlic, and the garlic odor is particularly strong. Strong enough, in fact, that even ramp-lovers will advise caution. If you sit down to a big meal of ramps, don't be surprised if people continue to keep their distance after a few days have passed!

Cautions aside, ramps add wonderful and uniquely pungent flavor to soups, egg dishes, casseroles, rice dishes and potato dishes. Use them raw or cooked in any recipe calling for scallions or leeks, or cook them in a more traditional way, scrambled with eggs or fried with potatoes. Since ramps aren't cultivated in the way leeks are, they're much easier to clean. Just cut off roots, rinse thoroughly, and scrub off any excess dirt on the bulbs.

Ramps aren't available for long, but you can chop and freeze them for cooked dishes. The green tops are milder in flavor and are usually used along with the bulbs. I chop about half of the green leaves separately, air-dry them for a few hours then freeze them in an air-tight container for future use as a seasoning.