



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

June 15, 2009

RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT

Marriott Grand Hotel Resort & Spa Point Clear, AL



This historic Marriott hotel is nestled on over 550 acres overlooking beautiful Mobile Bay. Located only 45 miles from Mobile and 65 miles from Pensacola, this resort is easy for those driving or flying. Not only does The Grand offer suites, as well as numerous meetings spaces for guests, they also have a 20,000 square foot spa on-site. Not to mention the two on-site golf courses, the *Dogwood* and the *Azalea*, both part of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail.

From casual to upscale dining, this property features 6 restaurants and a coffee shop, giving their guests plenty of selection during their stay. The Saltwater Grill is an upbeat, yet casual dining experience featuring local seafood. The Grand Dining Room offers an eclectic menu with fresh seafood, local produce, hand-picked herbs from the chef's garden and a bold selection of wines.



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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

MARKET REPORT

ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS VOLATILE, PRICES UP

Avocado	Celery	Lemons	Onions
Pears	Potatoes	Tomatoes	

ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS GOING DOWN/STEADY

Apples	Asparagus	Bell Peppers	Berries
Broccoli	Carrots	Cauliflower	Cucumbers
Grapes	Green Onions	Kiwi	Lettuce
Melons	Oranges	Squash	Stone Fruit

BRIX READINGS TABLE

CANTALOUPE 12ct	12	GOOD
CANTALOUPE 15ct	NA	NA
HONEYDEW	13.5	GOOD
PINEAPPLE	14	EXCELLENT
RED GRAPE	18	EXCELLENT
GREEN GRAPE	18	EXCELLENT
STRAWBERRIES	10	AVERAGE
RASPBERRIES	10	AVERAGE
BLACKBERRIES	14	POOR
BLUEBERRIES	13	EXCELLENT

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



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

APPLES/PEARS

Small sized Red Delicious will remain tight for the remainder of the season. Gala apples are close to 95% sold in the state of Washington for the season. Demand continues to exceed available supplies and the market remains strong. Retail demand remains strong as we move into June, especially in 3 and 5# bags. New Zealand is still tight on Galas, and their market remains strong. Red Delicious Apples in the lower grades (lighter color) will continue light in supply as the controlled atmosphere storage crop coming out remains high in color. Small sized Granny Smith continue to be excellent choices for someone looking for a 'deal' on apples and there are still very good supplies available. Oregon Pears are winding down their season quickly with possibly only this week left in storage production. Washington will go through the month of June on pears with the Anjou and Red Anjou varieties.

ASPARAGUS

This commodity continues to be steady to start the week. California production should end approximately the end of June. Washington production will finish in approximately 3 weeks. California production is moderate on most sizes. Product out of Peru continues to be available on the East Coast.

AVOCADO

- **Mexican fruit:** Mexico is 95% shipped for this year's crop. The off-blooms will begin in a few weeks, but volume will be light. No increase in volume will come until new crop begins sometime in late August. Supplies will be short until that time.
- **California Fruit:** California growers are packing good volume, but still lighter than years past. Growers are trying to make their crop last until new crop Chilean and Mexican begins in August. Until then, it looks like a demand exceeds supply situation.

BELL PEPPERS

- **Eastern Bells:** Florida is now finished with pepper and Georgia is going strong. Recent heavy rains have delayed the picking but as the weather dries up in the coming days, good volume is expected. Quality will be fair for the next several days.

BERRIES

- **Strawberries:** California production continues this week to be adequate even with cooler temperatures. Oxnard has finished harvesting for the season. The cooler weather is slowing production but we continue to see firm fruit and good quality, while demand seems to have eased up. Many shippers have good supplies of fruit with business looking to pick up as the week progresses.
- **Raspberries:** California production continues to be very strong. Both Salinas / Watsonville are producing and we are seeing great availability as more shippers have increased production in the northern growing areas with new fruit and FOB are reflecting this. With a large volume order you can achieve an aggressive FOB. New crop quality is good.
- **Blackberries:** Blackberry production for the most part is finished in Mexico, and we can expect all Mexican products to clean up within the next week, although there are some clean up loads still popping in. We continue looking at local production as it is increasing. Watsonville is producing fair quantities, and is inconsistent at this point as we are currently experiencing a slight gap in production as growing regions transfer from Mexico to California. We are seeing far less availability and can expect this trend to continue well into or through this week.
- **Blueberries:** Blueberry production continues to increase in California and is getting stronger. The Central Valley is the primary area of production and we are seeing some better production in Oxnard and Watsonville. Fruit is starting to transfer over from the valley. This week we are seeing a better variety of pack sizes: 6oz, pints and 18oz. The Carolinas are now producing good volume and seem to be arriving in good condition.



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

BROCCOLI

This market continues to be steady. Demand overall is on the light side. The quality out of the Salinas Valley and Santa Maria growing regions continue to be good. Supplies will be ample to fill all orders throughout the week.

CARROTS

California carrots are now coming out of the new fields in Bakersfield. Size and quality is much better than the ones from the Imperial Valley.

CAULIFLOWER

Supplies are fairly light but demand is even lighter. Large sizing still has a little sharper pricing, 9s in particular. By suppliers cutting back on acreage of cauliflower, this has created a shortage of product in the industry. The overall quality of this commodity has been better compared to previous weeks. Santa Maria and Salinas continue to be the main areas of production.

CELERY

This market is a little stronger. Salinas's production has started up lightly in production and supplies should be better next week. Overall, Oxnard has ample supplies to fill all orders. The seeder issue continues to be stronger in Oxnard compared to Santa Maria.

CITRUS

- **Lemons:** The Central Valley is 93% picked. Ventura County is supplying the bulk of the volume. There are good supplies and that are peaking on 140's, followed by 165's and 115's. Summer demand is beginning to pick up.
- **Limes:** Supplies are beginning to increase this week. Sizes are showing some growth now, and we will start to see more 110's and 150's and less of the smaller sizes.
- **Oranges:** Late navel varieties will continue into next week. Valencia production is good. Quality is very good, with sizes running 88's, 113's, and 138's.

CUCUMBERS

Eastern Cucumbers: Cucumbers are in good supply in Georgia and the quality continues to improve. With Eastern supplies increasing as North Carolina and Tennessee get started, the cucumber market should continue on a downward trend.

GRAPES

Flame red seedless grapes remain extremely limited in supply heading into the weekend from both Mexico and Coachella. Recent rains in Mexico have severely shortened the crop there and they continue to fight with light color and the fruit not coloring up before maturity. They are down in total estimated quantities already by well over 1 million boxes to date. Nogales crossings look to remain limited for the duration of the Mexico crop. Coachella also remains short and is also still fighting light color from the field. Temperatures have been cooler than normal, but for the duration that they are cooler, it is now slowing production as well. Demand pressure in Coachella has also increased significantly as a result of the Mexico crop shortages. These conditions along with the currently strong demand will keep the market strong for what looks like the entire month of June. Green seedless grapes are shipping as Sugarone from Coachella/Nogales; there are good supplies and deals available.

GREEN ONIONS

There is no change in this market. Supplies continue to be good from the Mexican region. This market should remain stable for the entire week. The quality continues to be good, with little to no problems reported.



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

KIWI

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

LEAF LETTUCE

This market is stable on all leaf items. Fringe burn is being seen with all suppliers on romaine at harvesting time. There has also been reports of browning inside the bunches of the rib area. Some suppliers are worse off than others, but it is out there. All other leaf items remain steady. There has been much less complaints on defects like insects damage.

LETTUCE

This market continues to be steady. Expect lettuce to be moderate in availability throughout the week. The Salinas Valley has had better weather this past weekend and production numbers may increase slightly. Mildew damage always is an issue when the weather goes from fog to heat. This change in weather waits to be seen on how it will affect the lettuce crop. The weights for palletized lettuce continue to be reported at 45-47#s.

MELONS

- **Cantaloupes:** Cantaloupe supplies are slightly better going into the weekend, but growing temperatures remain cooler than normal for this time of year. With supplies significantly lower than normal in the smaller sized fruit, both CA and AZ desert growers are struggling to get enough supplies to meet current demand. Fruit sizing is mostly ALL large (9 and JBO 9ct) and supply shortages remain in both major growing areas. The CA Desert melons are struggling with the inconsistent weather patterns as well as very low yields. Arizona desert production has been very sporadic and shippers are coming up well short of their estimates due to low production yields. Cantaloupes will remain tight for at least the next 4-5 days, and until growers can get into new fields that are producing better quantities of fruit.
- **Honeydews:** Production of Honeydews in Arizona, Mexico, and CA is still yielding good supplies of fruit. Although that is the case, small sized fruit has tightened up in all areas and the market is up on them. Expect more large fruit next week and the market to continue stronger on the smaller sizes.

ONIONS

The market is extremely limited on yellow onions and looks to remain that way for the next couple of weeks. Huron availability is still very limited due to a combination of rain and colder weather. Texas and Imperial Valley California have finished up for the season. New Mexico has tightened up as the California product becomes more limited.

POTATOES

The quality is still very good on the Idaho storage crop. Retail volume has slowed down so carton packing has slowed for shippers. Wisconsin is becoming more limited with availability. Colorado has good supplies and quality is still good. Colored storage potatoes are still available out of Wisconsin. California new crop colored potatoes available with very good quality. New crop California Russets have started in a light way with better availability next week. Northern and Southern Florida now with availability on new crop colored potatoes.

SQUASH

Eastern Squash: Squash is now readily available as far north as Virginia and volume and quality out of South Georgia are improving. Demand will stay strong for the next few days but the increased availability throughout the east will bring the market down through out the week.



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

STONE FRUIT

Cooler temperatures have significantly slowed production on the CA tree fruit deal. Yellow/White Peaches, Yellow/White Nectarines, Apricots, Pluots, Plums are available in good supplies, but most all fruit is sizing up very large with the cool weather. There is high colored good eating tree fruit available and FOB prices continue to adjust downward. Cherry production is winding down quickly in CA, and Washington State is ready to fire up! Quality is still very good and even with the recent light rains, the tree fruit deal should continue going strong.

TOMATOES

The tomato market (all tomatoes) is going to be a great deal higher this week compared to last. Central Florida is finishing up due to past wet weather. North Florida will start next week with very light production. Quality is only average, there is a lot of damage to the fruit. The shippers are grading extra hard however there are still some shoulder problems and rain check. Food service will be very limited.

WATERMELONS

Watermelon supplies continue to be very good for the CA/AZ desert production and Mexico has also ramped up production giving way to steady market conditions and much better availability in both the seeded and seedless fruit. Demand remains only moderate on watermelons and watermelon quality is very good from the Yuma, AZ and CA desert growing areas.

VALUE ADDED

Processors will likely be dealing with fringe burn issues on romaine. Some light bruising has also been reported on chopped romaine. Complaints have been minimal on green onions. The warmer weather we had last weekend could create quality issues in lettuce, mainly mildew issues.

INDUSTRY REPORT School Nutrition Programs

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced legislation last week that would tighten the regulations on foods sold in schools. The bill parallels Lynn Woolsey's Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act of 2009, which was introduced in the House in March.

Both bills would give the secretary of agriculture the authority to regulate foods sold throughout the school environment. Currently, the USDA can only regulate fully reimbursable meals sold through the National School Lunch Program and an outdated list of "foods of minimal nutritional value." That list is short — it includes only soda water, water ices, chewing gum and certain candies, with no mention of fat, calories, sugar or sodium. What's more, the USDA can only regulate those foods inside the lunchroom during the lunch hour. The rules allow schools to sell all the sodas, french fries and Snickers bars they want. And sell they do — those are the items that bring in the most revenue, and many cafeteria directors say they're vital for keeping meal programs afloat.

Under the proposed legislation, the USDA would have to issue regulations for all foods sold on school premises, except for foods sold as part of fundraisers. The bills in the House and the Senate are almost identical, except that Woolsey's legislation calls for regulation during the "extended school day," which includes any activities under the school's watch, even if they take place before or after official school hours. Harkin's bill simply refers to the "school day" — which means students would be able to buy their sodas, chips and candy bars before they head off to their after-school activities...



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

The only other difference appears in the bills' guidelines for the USDA regulations. Both bills would require the secretary of agriculture to issue regulations that take into account the "positive and negative contributions of nutrients, ingredients and foods to children's diets." Harkin's legislation would additionally require the secretary to consider "nutrients of concern" identified in the most recent edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

These bills aren't going to fix school food, but they'll get rid of the soda and the deep fryers. And with the current state of school lunch, that's a huge step in the right direction. Contact your senators and representatives, and make sure they get on board!

*Article from www.schoolfoodpolicy.com