



Food Service Report

October 16th, 2019

Weather Update

California A cold front brings gusty winds and cooler temperatures across California into the weekend. High pressure returns with a gradual warming next week. Cooler temperatures and strong winds (30-40 mph) impact the southwestern desert regions as the cold front passes to the north.

Mexico A couple tropical storm systems look to move into Central Mexico this week with heavy rains across the region. Extended forecasts show another tropical system possibly early next week.

Florida Another cold front brings scattered showers across Northern Florida into the weekend as warm flow from the gulf returns next week.

Lettuce

Iceberg Lettuce Demand exceeds supplies industry wide and will continue for at least the next two weeks. Yields remain lower out of Salinas and Santa Maria. The extreme temperatures last month have negatively impacted production numbers along with quality. Some common defects being reported upon arrivals include puffiness, misshapen heads, mechanical damage and decay. Weights are averaging 37-42 pounds depending on supplier. Escalated pricing on value-added lettuce is in play with all shippers. Huron has started in a small way. Production will start in Yuma by the first or second week of November.

Leaf Lettuce Supplies remain extremely limited on romaine out of Northern and Southern California. Yields continue to suffer industry wide due to excessive warm temperatures in the growing regions over the last couple months. Common defects reported include mechanical, fringe burn, mildew and insect damage. The market on red and green leaf lettuce is also starting to become active. Weights are averaging 20-22 pounds. Value-added romaine product will likely reach second-tier escalators by the end of this week. Yuma is expected to begin harvesting by early November on most leaf items.

Tomato Outlook

Mexico Harvest out of Mexico is set to begin in December with substantial volume available by January. Supplies will remain limited until then.

California Production will be rapidly finishing up this week going into the following. The market is strong on little to no volume available. Pricing on roma tomatoes is ranging between \$18.95- \$22.95 for best quality repacks.

Florida Fall tomato harvest is set to begin by early November with no volume available until the week of Thanksgiving. The Southeastern tomato market is in the \$19.95- \$24.95 range for best quality repacks.

Grape Tomatoes Mexico's grape production is expected to increase this month as Baja growers move into new blocks and their fall plantings become available.

Outlook With California finishing up and Florida still another month away, expect demand to exceed supplies on tomatoes through late November. Quality will be fair to average until harvest begins on new crop.



Citrus

Navel Oranges New California crop Navels are just around the corner out of the Central Valley. Harvest is set to begin in light volumes over the next two weeks as soon as sugar levels are approved by the County Agriculture Department. Once the fruit is harvested, we will degree for 5-7 days depending on color. Sizing will be smaller to start and increase as we get into November and December. Promotional volumes will be available on bulk and bags from November through May.

Lemons California lemon production has started out of the Coachella and Imperial Valley, while the Central Valley will begin over the next couple of weeks. Imports from Chile will start winding down as well as Mexico through the remainder of October and into November.

Limes Prices continue to be steady with additional imported fruit hitting the market. Larger sized limes continue to be in tight supply. Quality is trending upwards as weather conditions improve.

Cucumbers

Eastern Supply Crops are slowing down in the Northern States, though product should be available for another 7-10 days. Eastern North Carolina has continued with strong volumes due to heat pushing crops along. Quality on Georgia's first harvest is fair due to the immense heat but will improve as the weather is expected to cool down. Florida crops will start by the end of October.

Western Supply Volume out of Baja has slowed down due to cool weather, though quality remains strong. Expect a downward pressure on volume on volume towards the end of October in Baja as some late season growers were unable to harvest. Farms in Mainland Mexico started 10 days earlier than usual with additional growers expected to start next week. No gap in production is anticipated. Quality out of Baja remains strong.

Squash

Yellow/Italian Supplies are available in good supply throughout the country. The East has product from Canada to Georgia and all points in between. The West is gradually starting to transition from a mostly California deal to Mexican production. Baja has come along with Fall acreage and starting to see crossings from growers in the northern areas of Mainland Mexico. There are some scattered issues with scarring and scuffing on yellow squash, but overall quality is nice from almost all areas.

Avocados

Mexico Current weather for the state of Michoacán calls for mild to intense rains, which could limit the harvest. Field prices remain steady on new crop fruit (Aventejada). The size curve continues to lean towards smaller fruit out of Mexico, causing an oversupply of 60's and smaller. Sizes 48 and larger continue to strengthen with little expectation for change. At this point 90% of the avocados are coming from MX with no arrivals being sent from Peru or Chile.

Bell Peppers

Green Bells The market is stable to slightly lower compared to last week as stocks have increased out of California. Quality ranges from good to excellent; skins are smooth, texture is crisp, and flavor is zesty.

Red/Yellow Bells Mexico is crossing a steady supply on all sizes and there is ample fruit available to meet overall market demand. Excellent quality reported, color is even with a subtly sweet flavor.

Onions

Northwest The market has taken a slight dip in pricing with decreased demand. Growers are focused on finishing harvest and working vigorously to get product into storage before the hard freeze arrives. We are seeing one of the earliest freezes in the Northwest in over 30 years. Onion growers are expressing concern about getting all product harvested and stored prior to any long-term freeze damage takes place. It was initially reported that the Northwest onion crops were down slightly compared to last year and would experience a "normal" supply situation. However, depending on what happens with the freeze, the supply situation could drastically change.

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