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# Retail Market Report

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Tomato Update

**Florida** Spring tomato harvest has commenced and should start seeing supplies improve from this area on round tomatoes. Very few roma tomatoes available. Markets are in the high teens to low twenties for best repacks.

**Mexico** Fair volume being crossed at this time. Roma tomatoes are in extremely short supply. Medium roma are being quoted in the \$22.95-\$25.95 range while large and extra-large priced between \$26.95-\$28.95. Vine ripe tomatoes are in the low to mid-twenties for the best quality on the larger sizes.

**Heirloom Tomatoes** Supplies are down drastically out of Baja and Central Mexico due to cool weather. Markets have elevated as demand exceeds supply.

**Organic Heirloom Tomatoes** Supplies are down, and markets have elevated. Due to cooler weather and reduced production, forecasting Organic Heirlooms to be light for the remainder of March and through most of April. Demand exceeds supply and forecasting volume to improve by May.

**Cherry Tomatoes** Volume out of Mexico has dipped this week and could dramatically decline due to rain and weather impacts.

**Grape Tomatoes** Mexico's grape tomato production has been up and down but improving with better weather conditions. The immediate future looks good, but prices continue to adjust, rising several dollars to meet strong retail demand.

**Outlook** While foodservice business has slowed considerably, retail grocery business has increased 8-10-fold. Retail demand has outstripped both product and transportation at every level. Freight rates have skyrocketed with demand exceeding business to get produce loaded and shipped to all regions of the country.

## Weather Outlook

**California** Weather in Yuma growing region battled multiple rainstorms. This trend looks to continue with another rainstorm starting Wednesday and going into Thursday. The rain will also bring unseasonably cold daytime temperatures with lows in the mid 30s to upper 40s. These rainstorms will once again bring muddy fields and delayed harvests.

**Florida** After having cooler temperature, the heat has returned in Florida. By Thursday look for max temps to be in the mid 80s and peak over the weekend with temperatures reaching the 90s.



# Citrus

**Navel Oranges** We are now in peak production out of the Central Valley and Coastal regions. Sizing will peak on 72/88/56/48ct. Larger sized navels available now through the remainder of the season.

**Lemons** California production is wrapping up quickly out of Coachella and Imperial Valley. The coastal regions and Central Valley will have strong supplies through April/May.

**Limes** The market has elevated. Volume is low, especially small sizes; large fruit (110-115 count limes) are more abundant. As retail demand continues to increase, food service availability will fall. Expect prices to continue climbing for the next 4-6 weeks.

**Grapefruit** Our next crop of California grapefruit will begin late February to early March.

# Bell Peppers

**Red/Yellow Bells** The market is slightly higher compared to last week. Mexican stocks crossing through Nogales are tightening due to the rain. Good quality reported with minor issues of softness and scaring.

**Green Bells** Lighter supplies are crossing through Nogales this week. Mostly choice grade is being packed. Quality is fair at best. The market on green bells ranges depending on quality. Supplies are expected to remain light over the next couple of weeks.

# Onions

**Northwest/Mexico** The onions market showed strength this week as retail demand increased in all regions. Northwest storage supplies will continue through April, along with Utah and Colorado. Crossings from Mexico continue into South Texas with rising markets and high demand. Domestic supplies in the California desert and Texas will begin producing fresh run onions mid-late April.

# Avocados

**California** Ventura County was hit with steady rainfall over the weekend and showers are expected to continue throughout the week. Growers have confirmed that with the significant amount of recent rain, production has come to a halt. However, avocados can withstand the rain and there is no damage to the fruit internally or externally. Suppliers were leaning heavily on this California crop to assist with the shortage of Mexican fruit but with rain disrupting harvest and limiting availability. Current weather conditions in California will keep this market strong. Overall quality is good and will continue improving as the season progresses.

**Mexico** Demand has strengthened, and the market remains active. Foodservice business has tapered off, but retail is capitalizing on the growing demand. Ripe fruit may be limited for the next couple of weeks. Anticipating a gradual increase this week on all sizes. With Mexico pacing the harvest and California enduring rain delays on production, the market will remain tight. Holy Week is just weeks away and there will be no harvest in Mexico. Shippers will attempt to reload and replenish inventories for the Cinco De Mayo pull.

# Berries

**Strawberries** Supplies remain extremely light out of all growing areas. Santa Maria and Oxnard are experiencing intermittent rain events and cooler than normal weather, which is reducing yields and impacting quality. Supplies are expected to remain light going into next week as shippers work through the rain issues. Recent retail demand has surged due to the national virus pandemic. Florida continues to produce decent volume but anticipated to end the season any day now due to the increasing heat the area.

**Blueberries** Volume remains on the lighter side out of Central Mexico, Georgia and Florida. Production is expected to increase but is being offset by heavy demand. Chilean imports are still arriving sporadically on both east and west coast ports.

