

TESTA PRODUCE Market Report

Outlook for the Week of

**August 29,
2012**



Market Report

It's back to school time. Which is an exciting and usually busy time for parents and students alike. I hope this back school season goes well for students, parents, and us foodservice people! Here's an overview of what's happening in the markets right now.

Apples are excellent and the market is higher. Washington Apple demand is strong because of the back to school rush, make sure you stay ahead to get what you need. Pears are really good quality with lots of varieties available: Bartlett, Bosc, and Stark-Crimson. Asparagus is lower and quality is good. Supplies are the best in small and standard sizes, and the only pack sizes that are available are 11#-ers.

Avocado is steady and quality is excellent. The Mexican Flora Loca crop has started. This crop has lower maturity and will take longer to ripen than the old crop. Mexican supplies are light until September but California volume is good. Bell Peppers are steady and quality is good. Greens and Reds are trending upward. Hot weather and gapping has effected production and quality; lighter supplies will be coming in this week. Golds are pretty much the same- demand exceeds supply.

Berries are overall steady. Strawberries are just fair right now; bruising is showing up in all areas and product is not holding up like it should, so only order what you need. With Labor Day weekend upon us, demand is backing off. Right now the market is firm but will weaken as the weekend approaches. Raspberries are steady but weakening towards the end of the week mainly because of light demand, quality is good though. Blackberries are in a demand exceeds supply situation and quality is only fair. This market will stay tight for the next month or so. Blueberries are higher right now and quality is improving.

Broccoli is steady and quality is good. Carrot supplies are good and the warm weather has led to good sizing. Cauliflower is steady with good quality. Plenty of product in the markets right now, with smaller sizes slightly less available. Prices might go up a little next week though, but we'll have to wait and see. Celery is higher and sizes are tightening up. Cucos are steady and quality is good. The market is trending upward. Currently demand exceeds supplies and production gaps will further impact availability. Eggplant is steady with better supplies on large and fancy fruit. Weather could affect production and quality.

Market Report, Cont'd...

Now for some Citrus: Lemons are at full production. Supplies are good and demand is steady. Valencia Oranges are steady but small sized Oranges (113's and 138's) are very limited right now. Lime supplies are down on all sizes. Rain has been slowing harvest and causing quality issues.

Red Grapes are steady with light demand and quality is excellent. Greens are in good supply with a steady market. Thompson and Princess are both available, as well as Black Seedless and Red Globes. Green Onions are steady. Supplies have tightened up out of Mexico and quality continues to have a few issues with decay. Your best bet for availability is pencil sizing. Yellow Onions are lighter on some sizes again in different growing areas. Reds are turning downward and Whites are lower in availability in all areas. Quality has been excellent on all Onion colors.

Leaf Lettuce markets have softened. Romaine has light to moderate availability but demand has eased off so prices are down slightly. Some Romaine quality issues have come up such as bugs and fringe and tip burn. Romaine still commands a higher price than Green, Red, and Butter. The Iceberg Lettuce market is steady, supplies continue to be good, and weights are strong. Some pink ribbing and decay issues have shown up, but it's minimal. Availability should be good throughout this week.

Melons Markets: Cantaloupes are still limited, because temperatures have slowed growth. Quality has been good overall. Honeydew Melons are steady. Sizes are peaking at 5's and 6's but all sizes are available. Watermelons are steady and the market is trending up. Quality is good. Availability on Seeded Watermelon is sporadic.

Potato markets are slightly lower in all areas and overall quality has been excellent. Squash is steady but trending upward on Italian and Yellow Straight-neck. Weather has impacted production and quality. Stone Fruits are running large with limited availability of Vol-Fill Fruit. Nectarines have better availability, but Plums remain limited in an active market.

Tomatoes are steady overall. Mature Greens from California continue to be the largest supply source. Extra Large Vine Ripe Tomatoes are being shipped out with good yields. This should continue, as long as Mother Nature doesn't play her hand in it.

Wishing everyone a Happy and safe Labor Day Weekend.

Produce Quiz

I am a cruciferal. Known to bring good luck to those who ingest me, I am an herbaceous annual plant native to Europe and western Asia. Romans used my seeds as well as my leaves. As a member of the cabbage family I am related to watercress, mustard and radishes. I can grow as high as twenty inches but many times my tender baby leaves are harvested when they are about three inches long. My leaves are similar in shape to a radish or a dandelion, but my nutty, bitter flavor is by far the best. I am a relatively perishable green and should be used a couple days after harvest. Some people store me in a glass of fresh water (like cut flowers) that would be changed daily, but most refrigerate me with a damp cover at my base. We think that's best. Consumed raw, I am a feature in many salads, a component of many other salads, and I combine magically with cheese (goat or parmesan slivers) and citrus (blood or cara-cara oranges). I can even add some zip to your best potato salad. When cooked, I make a great base for fish or beef entrees, or wilted as a side dish. If you're careful I can even be fried. Strong in fiber, I am also a good source of vitamin A, vitamin C, and calcium. As a pharmafood I am considered to have the properties of a stimulant and a diuretic.

Last Quiz Answer: Cabbage



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