

Produce Report

December 15, 2014



Organically Grown
Company

Employee and Grower Owned

Promoting Health through Organic Agriculture as a Leading Sustainable Organization

What to look for that is NEW and EXCITING The holiday push is next week already! This is the holiday where cost is not the driving factor for customers; it's all about selection, quality and higher-end offerings. Things like Belgian Endive, asparagus, and pineapple will sell at a very different pace than on a normal week. Read the food magazines to see what is hot and think outside the box. The storms hitting California right now will keep berries questionable, so rely on other holiday classics like citrus, beans, and brussel sprouts to capture your customers and keep them intrigued. With the overlap between the desert and central valley, watch for deals. Feature what makes sense for the holiday, but keep in mind that during the week after Christmas and the first week of 2015, sales will spike on anything healthy that will help customers keep their New Year's resolutions.

Apples Apples are steady with strong supplies. Selection is robust but starting to dwindle. The best values are Honeycrisp and Pinova. Fuji, Gala, Braeburn, Delicious, Granny Smith and Jonagold are all also very promotable. For deals on heirlooms, look to Spitzenburg and Winesap. Apples in strong demand with great margin potential should be on endcaps, in ads, and on the sample tables!

Berries Cranberries are still available and fruit should be available for the Christmas pull. Blueberry supplies are improving as Chile is starting to come on board. Raspberry production is also falling off due to the rains but should improve a bit by weeks end. Production is starting to seasonally decline with prices beginning to inch up. Strawberries are very tight with growers asking for top of the market pricing. Heavy rains last week with lingering showers has brought the strawberry category to its knees on both organic and conventional. The good news is that growers are getting into new fields in both Coachella and Baja; as the weather warms a bit and dries out, there will be a fresh, nice new crop fruit. If all goes well, volume will pick up significantly by Christmas.

Cherries Chilean cherries have started with steady supplies. Expect large to jumbo size with red/mahogany color. Prices are firm and will hold.

Misc. Citrus Selection is currently limited due to all the rain in California, but variety is on the way! Satsuma will be the main player for the next three weeks with Johansen finally getting in and picking. He has a good crop to move; with limited time he is motivated to be aggressive and sell fruit. Clementine are just getting started with better supplies over the next few weeks. Both varieties will be available by the box, bulk and bag. Daisy are available with a strong supply of Minneola available for Christmas week. The lemon market continues to be aggressive with full colored desert fruit to offer. Deals are available on smaller sizes. Meyer are also really coming on with prices steady but firm. For baking this is the fruit to really promote as it's fragrant, juicy and seasonal. Limes are steady. Unusual citrus like Calamondin, Finger Lime, early Kumquat, Fall Glo are available but limited.

Grapes The domestic deal is almost finished. Black grapes are out, green are almost finished, and red have about one week left. Prices are firm. Imports out of Peru are starting and will become available by Christmas. Prices will be very high, but it's organic for wintertime!

Grapefruit Texas fruit is eating great! The fruit is full colored with choices of sizes and grades making it the perfect December feature. California is also in the game with lighter colored but very clean Marsh. Prices on both are similar. Pummelo round out the category with light numbers of Oro Blanco and Cocktail Citrus right around the corner.

Melons There is a very limited supply of watermelon left, and otherwise melons are over for a few months.

Oranges Navel orange supplies continue to improve despite the rains. Early season Beck and Fukumoto are still available. Fruit is ungasped with lighter interior color. Deals are available on choice with fancy pricing still firm. Mexican Valencia are being offered for juice fruit with some Hamlin also available. Prices are steady. Blood will start in early 2015.

Pears December is a great month to promote pears! Pears are a feature for gifts and baking. Selection remains strong overall, with the exception of Bartlett which are finished. Concord and Comice are very promotable. Show selection and display together letting the colors weave a beautiful color scheme!

Misc. Fall Fruit Hachiya are finished. Fuyu are steady and promotable. Pomegranates are mostly available in large sizes. Supplies are more limited with prices inching up. Kiwi are readily available and a great ad item for future weeks.

Tropical Fruit Mango supplies remain light with inconsistent fruit. Prices will remain firm until Mexico starts late February. Pineapple and banana are steady.

Asparagus Asparagus remains very light with firm pricing.

Avocados All sizes of Mexican Hass are steady. Domestic Bacon continue to be available, but are all large sized. Quality is good.

Broccoli The market is crashing with strong production coming on from a number of districts combined with light demand. Quality is very good to excellent. Promote broccoli for the next few weeks. Romanesco is limited but available. Broccolini is steady.

Bunched Greens Selection is excellent with deals on most kale and chard. Collard and mustard are both steady. Quality is good to very good with supplies increasingly coming out of Oxnard to Coachella. Demand is high, so promote healthy greens!

Cabbage Green cabbage is promotable with strong supplies from a number of growers. Quality is good with some peeling needed. Local savoy is tight. Red is available but lighter. Napa is limited and spendy.

Carrots Local bunch carrots are finished. Supplies available are out of California or Mexico. Quality and variety are inconsistent; some growers are offering the traditional Nantes, while others seeking more aesthetic appeal have gone to the Emperor. Pricing is firm. Rainbow are available but limited. Bulk and packaged are steady.

Cauliflower The market is very strong reflecting an active conventional deal. The market will start to come off by years end with stronger supplies out of the desert.

Celery Salinas is finished. All volume is centered in Oxnard with less acreage forcing much stronger pricing. Quality is good to very good. Local celery root is steady.

Cucumbers Slicers are extremely limited with some gaps. Prices are very firm. English cukes are available, but demand is higher with the slicers pricing up. Quality is very nice.

Lettuce. Volume across the board is increasing with both Oxnard and Coachella now into production. Prices are starting to correct downward. Quality is good to very good in terms of both color and weight. Iceberg is still limited and spendy. Avoid long term ads.

Mushrooms Crimini, white and portabella are becoming more available with Canadian growers back up and running. Prices are steady. Local shitake are steady. Wild varieties are available but have transitioned into winter time offerings with a few Chanterelle, Black Trumpet and Hedgehog to offer. Prices are seasonally strong.

Onions/Garlic Northwest grown onions are steady with promotable supplies of yellow, sweet, white and red. Quality remains very good. Beautiful Cipollini and shallots from Brian Anderson are also available. Garlic is unchanged.

Peppers Supplies remain tight for the short term with the transition from California to Mexico. Green peppers are light but available. Red are a mix of domestic and spendy Mexican shade grown. Yellow and orange are all shade grown and are limited and spendy. Chilies are still just getting started. Jalapeno, Serrano, and Poblano are most available with lighter numbers of Habanero, Anaheim and Padrone Fruit is spendy but very nice!

Potatoes. The Northwest deal is going strong with good supplies, selection, and steady pricing. 10x5 Russet continue to be the best value. Spuds continue to be a great mover, so promote!

Roots Roots are steady with strong supplies of all Northwest grown beets, parsnips, rutabaga, turnip, horseradish and burdock. Yam pricing is up from the holiday deals. Demand remains good with excellent quality.

Squash Local varieties are thinning out. Butternut remains very abundant and promotable. Quality is still very good, but expect to rotate it regularly since squash will start to fall apart this time of year. Prices are steady. Zucchini and yellow squash remain light and spendy. More volume is expected to come on soon which will help bring pricing back in line. Quality is very good.

Tomatoes Tomatoes are steady with light supplies, firm prices and limited variety. The hurricanes last summer really affected the front end of the deal, but growers are getting strong growth with volume to increase throughout the month. Roma, slicers, cherry types and vines are available with solid quality.

Trivia Question of the week: Leeks, like garlic and onions, belong to a vegetable family called the Allium vegetables. Since leeks are related to garlic and onions, they contain many of the same beneficial compounds found in these health-promoting vegetables. Leeks enjoy a long history that can trace its heritage back through antiquity. Thought to be native to Central Asia, they have been cultivated in this region and in Europe for thousands of years. Leeks were prized by the ancient Greeks and Romans and were especially revered for their beneficial effect upon the throat. The Romans are thought to have introduced leeks to the United Kingdom, where they were able to flourish because they could withstand cold weather. Leeks have become the national emblem of what country?

Variety Vegetables Artichokes are starting in Oxnard, so volume is improving. Green beans are starting from a number of growers, which will smooth out supply and push pricing up. Quality is excellent. Bok choy and baby bok choy are steady. Brussels, Endive, and Escarole have strong supplies. Fennel and radish are steady. Local leeks continue to be promotable. Eggplant is very promotable. Snow peas are steady, and snap peas are increasing on bulk with plenty of 1# bags to offer. Tomatillos are light. Spinach, arugula, and salad mixes are steady.