



## A&Z Market Report

March 12, 2018

**GENERAL:** Rain is the watchword in most California growing regions this week. Some areas received significant moisture over the weekend and showers are forecast almost daily in some producing districts north of Los Angeles including Santa Maria, Fresno and Salinas. This scenario will be especially vexing for STRAWBERRY growers because hard rain easily bruises the tender, mature fruit. Although showers will be intermittent, harvest delays and poor yields could be the result. Lighter, poor-quality supplies may translate into higher prices by the end of the week. Southwest growing districts will have less rain, but farmers will have to deal with strong, gusty winds. Ideal weather continues in western Mexican growing regions.

### Tight Items:



**LIMES: Supplies**

**continue to be limited as prices continue to climb!** Production in Eastern Mexico is slowly increasing, but good quality is a challenge, especially for those who demand high-grade fruit. The poor quality is due to recent rains and cold weather. Some lower grade fruit is crossing the border. Shippers do not anticipate better quality supplies for another **2-3 weeks**. However, possible rain showers this week may alter this prediction.

**BANANAS: This market is still very active!** Since the beginning of the year, imports into the U.S. have been short because of chillier temperatures experienced in multiple Latin American producing countries. The colder weather has slowed plant growth, delayed harvesting and limited overall banana yields. Not surprisingly, demand in the U.S. has not let up as the first quarter of the year is always the highest in banana sales. This scenario has created a push for higher prices as all major importers scramble to fulfill contracts and/or prorate supplies to regular customers. Immature fruit is also a concern as ripening schedules become difficult to maintain. Everyone is pointing to April for better availability.

**ICEBERG & LEAF LETTUCES:** Harsh weather (rains and cold) and light availability due to being ahead of scheduled production have pushed these markets up. Recent light demand has kept lettuce markets from moving much higher. Desert districts are slowly warming, but SoCal production remains very limited and will continue with rain in the forecast this week. ROMAINE demand has jumped because of little supply while GREEN LEAF is only slightly better. ICEBERG and LEAF quality has been hurt by the cold with blister, peel and ribbing evident in some lots. It will take about two weeks of decent weather for supplies and quality to improve. Until then, **supplies are light, quality is erratic and prices are trending higher!**



**SOFT**

**SQUASHES: Prices are higher!** ZUCCHINI and especially YELLOW supplies are limited because of light production in Sinaloa, Mexico. Fortunately, the new spring crop in Hermosillo is just getting under way with better supplies available in about two more weeks.

**CAULIFLOWER: This market remains active** with many variables in play. Desert weather is warming and Salinas, CA is just starting—but volume is so light that it really has no impact on the market. With rain this week, it may be another two weeks or more before production increases. Sizing is small and overall quality is fair.

## Promotional Items:

**AVOCADOS:** Surprisingly, Mexican HASS imports increased this past week and we have received a special shipment of promotional avos! Pricing is way below the current market and quality is very nice. Now is the time because these beauties will not last long. Please call!



**STRAWBERRIES:** California growing regions have experienced rain and cold weather over the past two weeks. Temps are warming, but rain over the weekend and later this week will hinder production and yields. This scenario will keep the market uneven. However, we have received a special shipment of nice promotional berries that are value priced. Here too, supplies are limited. Please call our sales staff for price and details!



**APPLES:** U.S. fresh apple holdings are **11% higher** than this time last year! National storage inventories are **77.3 million** (42-pound) cartons, up from **69.8 million** a year ago and **15% higher** than the five-year average. Our apple buyer has secured some super promotional prices on the following varieties: BRAEBURN, FUJI, GALA, JONAGOLD, PINK LADY and AMBROSIA. Call our sales team to line up your next apple promo! [DID YOU KNOW? Honeycrisps made up about one-fourth (24.1%) of all apple sales in



**DRY ONIONS:** The Northwest storage market continues to be soft with good promotional opportunities for YELLOWS, SWEETS and REDS. Even though numbers indicate that onions may be short later this spring, supplies and prices are good this week. (Note: New crop import numbers from Mexico continue to increase, crossing through Texas to eastern markets. New Texas onions will start in April followed by California in May.) Please call for prices and info!

**POTATOES:** The Idaho RUSSET market remains steady with good prices available on poly retail packs in 5# and 10# bags. Idaho claims to have fewer supplies than a year ago, but prices have generally been flat for many weeks. Larger count baker prices are unchanged too. Please call!

**HARD SQUASHES:** ACORN, BUTTERNUT and SPAGHETTI prices are about as low we have seen, especially when you consider the cost of freight coming from Mexico. Quality is good, call!



**GREEN BELL PEPPERS:** Big sizes are abundant and

the U.S. in January, up over 10% from a year ago!]

**TOMATOES:** Heavy volumes have been crossing the border since the first of the year. Generally good weather has been kind to Mexican growers with heavy production. But now, farmers are skipping over old fields to clear out inventory. Prices have been stagnant, but with fewer supplies in the pipeline, prices have started to rebound. However this week, ROUND, ROMA and GRAPE TOMATO prices are still attractive and quality is good. Please call!

inexpensive this week while COLORED BELLS are not. Cooler temps in Southern Sonora, Mexico fields have limited availability. Please call!

**BROCCOLI CROWNS:** There is a two-tiered market based on the growing region. Domestic product is higher and supplies have been somewhat limited because of cooler temps. But, abundant crown supplies are crossing the border from Mexico and are much cheaper. Please call!

## Fresh Fruits and Vegetables:



**ASPARAGUS:** Thanks to the recent chill down in temps, fewer supplies from Mexico have crossed the border in the last ten days. Sizing has been affected too. Recent flat demand will change as the Easter (April 1) pull begins this weekend. California harvesting has barely started and recent cold will not help domestic production either. Prices have doubled in just a week.

**CUCUMBERS:** Limited supplies continue to cross the border due to a previous cold snap and light, season ending harvesting in Southern Sonora, Mexico. New production begins in about a week in the northern part of that state. This market will remain active for another two weeks.

**KIWIFRUIT:** The California season is coming to an end and the market has begun to rise. The East Coast has been receiving good but pricey supplies from Italy. New Chilean kiwis are arriving.



**SEEDLESS**

**GRAPES:** Steady markets continue this week with good quality RED and GREEN supplies regularly arriving from South America to the West Coast. Sizing is mostly Large to XL.

**MELONS:** WATERMELON supplies from Mexico continue to be limited even as the season moves to new northern fields. Steady, nice quality HONEYDEWS are arriving to western markets from Mexico. Good CANTALOUPE imports are regularly coming from the Caribbean.



### FANCY

**BERRIES:** Little SoCal production due to inclement weather and only moderate harvesting in Central Mexico are keeping these markets steady at current elevated levels. Declining BLUEBERRY volumes will continue to arrive from Chile through mid-April as their season winds down. Improving domestic supplies will fill the gap as warm temps return.

**CITRUS:** NAVEL ORANGES are in a rain market again this week. Sizing is running large and that is where the best values are. Growers are quick to harvest in between storms as the orchards dry out. Still, overall inventories are down and this is reflected in pricing. Peak season flavor and quality (lots of Fancy grades) define the crop for now. Surprisingly, the LEMON market is actually a bit lower with good harvesting still in the San Joaquin Valley and good volumes now coming from Ventura County. But, rain this week may impact supply. Murcott MANDARIN volume is good with larger sizing. Texas Ruby Red GRAPEFRUITS are in good supply too.

**GREEN ONIONS & CILANTRO:** These tender veggies have been hurt by the recent cold weather and production has yet to rebound causing shortages & erratic pricing. Warmer temps will help.



### STONE FRUIT:

The Chilean season is past peak production. PEACHES are ending soon, NECTARINES in 3-4 weeks and PLUMS a month later. (Note: Blooms have been seen on early California CHERRIES, PEACHES and NECTARINES. However, Central California experienced some freezing temps recently—bad for the blooms and bad for the bees.)