



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

MAY 25th 2009

The ancient Romans had a tradition: whenever one of their engineers constructed an arch, as the capstone was hoisted into place, the engineer assumed accountability for his work in the most profound way possible: he stood under the arch.”

Michael Armstrong

MARKET REPORT

ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS VOLATILE, PRICES UP

Avocadoes	Brussels Sprouts	Cauliflower	Lemons
Red Fresno Peppers	Yellow Wax Beans	Parsnips	Green Beans

ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS GOING DOWN/STEADY

Blackberry	Blueberry	Strawberry	Raspberry
Asparagus	C/T Green Beans	Carrots	Oranges
Eggplant	Watermelon	Eggs	Vidalia Onions
Cantaloupe	Honeydew	Tomatoes	Yellow Sq/Zucchini

BRIX READINGS TABLE

CANTALOUPE 12ct	13	GOOD
CANTALOUPE 15ct	NA	NA
HONEYDEW	11	AVERAGE
PINEAPPLE	16	EXCELLENT
RED GRAPE	16	EXCELLENT
GREEN GRAPE	17	EXCELLENT
STRAWBERRIES	11	AVERAGE
RASPBERRIES	11	AVERAGE
BLACKBERRIES	10	POOR
BLUEBERRIES	13	EXCELLENT

Within a given species of plant, the crop with a higher refractive index will have higher sugar content, higher mineral content, and higher protein content. This adds up to a sweeter tasting, more mineral-nutritious food with a lower nitrate and water content and better storage characteristics. As a broad generalization, produce over 12 Brix is considered good



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APPLES/PEARS

Demand for Gala Apples continues to exceed available supplies and the market remains strong. Retail demand is also very strong, especially in 3 and 5# bags. Washington could be out of Gala supplies by mid June. New Zealand is also snug, and their market remains strong. Red Delicious Apples in the lower grades remain tight. Small sized Granny Smith and small sized varietal apples continue to be excellent choices as there are still very good supplies available. Washington and Oregon Pears continue light production from storage and the Hood River, Oregon area (Oregon's largest pear producing area) could be done in as few as 2 weeks and leave Washington to finish the storage pear season. Both Washington and Oregon are shipping all #1 fruit from here until the end of the storage season due to quality concerns.

ASPARAGUS

This market has lowered. California production continues to have good supplies to fill all orders. Supplies continue to be heavier for standard sizing. Product out of Peru continues to be strong on the East Coast. Washington continues to be in full swing production and pricing has been competitive.

AVOCADO

- **Mexican fruit** – Mexican supplies remain light, but steady coming into the states. The Mexican crop is past their peak on production.
- **California Fruit** - California growers are packing good volume, but still lighter than years past, due to the much smaller crop this year.

BELL PEPPERS

- **Eastern Bells:** Central Florida is at the tail end of their pepper season but unable to pick due to several days of heavy rains in the area. Georgia is still very early in their season with not enough volume to compensate. Supplies will be limited and quality will be questionable for next week for next week.

BERRIES

- **Strawberries:** Californian production is getting a bit stronger, even with most shippers finishing and pulling out of Oxnard. Some shippers have expressed that Santa Maria is slowing down a bit as well, but there are good supplies in Salinas / Watsonville to fill the gaps. There are good supplies of organic strawberries in both Salinas and Santa Maria. The main issue we have been experiencing with Salinas fruit is that the size is a bit large for the clamshells, and we are seeing moderate bruising at delivery.
- **Raspberries:** Californian production continues to increase and is now very strong. Both Salinas / Watsonville are producing and we are seeing much better availability as more shippers have come on line in the northern growing areas with new fruit and fob are reflecting this. With a large volume order you can achieve an aggressive fob. New crop quality is good.
- **Blackberries:** Blackberry production is slowing, but still continues with consistent transfers arriving from Mexico, just not as much fruit. We can expect Mexican production to be wrapping up around June as are currently getting reports that Mexico is coming close to the end of their season. There continue to be shippers in much better shape than others. We continue looking at local production to increase. Watsonville is producing small quantities, and is inconsistent at this point.
- **Blueberries:** Blueberry production continues to slowly increase in California and will slowly increase even more over the next two weeks. The Central Valley is the primary area of production and we are seeing some better production in Oxnard and Watsonville. Fruit is starting to transfer over from the valley. This week we are seeing a better variety of pack sizes, 4.4, 6oz, pints and 18oz. Florida does not have much to offer currently due to 4 days of consistent rain. The growers can't get into the fields to harvest.

BROCCOLI

This market is stronger on both crown and carton business to start the week. Many suppliers have caught up with excess supplies. Broccoli crown production as well as bunched product will be lighter in supplies throughout the week in the Salinas Valley. In the Santa Maria region, production also has become lighter. The quality on all broccoli items continues to be good.

CARROTS

California carrots are now coming out of the new fields in Bakersfield. Size and quality is much better than the ones from the Imperial Valley. Georgia has good availability and quality on the East Coast.

CAULIFLOWER

Supplies continue to be light with all suppliers. The combination of lighter plantings and lower yields has created a gap in production. Expect this commodity to be light in availability throughout the week. The overall quality of this commodity has been average. Santa Maria and Salinas both have product available.

CELERY

This market has softened on all sizes. Overall, Oxnard has ample supplies to fill all orders. The quality continues to be good with little cedar to report. This market should be competitive in pricing or most of the week. Salinas's production is expected to begin in late June to July.

CITRUS

- **Lemons:** The Central Valley is 90% picked. Ventura County is supplying the bulk of the volume. There are good supplies and that are peaking on 140's, followed by 165's and 115's.
- **Limes:** Supplies are steady and running heavy to smaller fruit. Larger fruit is limited, but looks to start improving by the 1st or 2nd week of June. Quality is good.
- **Oranges:** Old crop Navel supplies continue to tighten as growers begin to finish for the season. Late navel varieties will continue into June. Valencia production is good. Quality is very good, with sizes running 88's, 113's, and 138's.



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CUCUMBERS

Western Cucumber: Mexico is in their last weeks of production. Baja is past their peak and supplies will start lightening as we move into June. California is starting with very light production and is looking at steady volume by the first week of June.

Eastern Cucumbers: Cucumbers are in full swing in Georgia with good supply and excellent quality. However, recent heavy rains will affect the quality and ultimately, the supply. Expect increased markets early next week and a steady climb upward over the next couple of weeks.

GRAPES

Crimson red seedless from Chile are on their last shipments this week. Flame red seedless grapes are packed in Coachella, CA and Nogales, AZ, but the Nogales crossings have been limited, due to lack of color on the vines. This has kept the market strong and demand is very active to finish this week on the Coachella fruit. Green seedless grapes are shipping as Perlette from Nogales and Sugarone from Coachella. Supplies are light on the Sugarone to start the Coachella deal. The Perlettes will continue shipping in Nogales with decent supplies and lighter demand. Lower scale truck traffic through the Nogales, AZ areas will have an affect on demand, but there is still enough to keep the market strong until supplies get better.

GREEN ONIONS

This market remains steady. There are no changes to report. Supplies continue to be strong from the Mexican region. Expect this market to be stable throughout the week. The quality continues to be good, with little to no problems reported.

KIWI

Kiwi quality remains excellent and movement is steady. The market will remain steady again this week.

LEAF LETTUCE

All leaf items are in good supplies in both the Salinas valley and Santa Maria growing regions. Warm weather this weekend has accelerated the growth of these commodities and suppliers are looking to move volume orders. The quality on leaf continues to be average at best. Some quality defects that continue to surface include, fringe burn, tip burn, and wind burn.

LETTUCE

There is a good availability of this commodity with most suppliers. Warm weather in the growing regions has this commodity in good shape in terms of weight and texture. The weights for palletized lettuce have become much better with 45-47#s reported on cartons. Suppliers no longer are substituting 30 count lettuce to fill orders like in the previous weeks. Las Cruces, Mexico continues to have production if interested. Yields continue to be stronger to start the week for production in Salinas.

MELONS

- **Cantaloupes:** The CA Desert and Arizona desert deals are going strong and only moderate demand the market will remain at lower levels to finish the week. There is volume on all sizes, but it will vary from shipper to shipper. Quality is rangy right now also with the abundance of fruit, but we have the quality you are looking for to get supreme customer satisfaction and repeat orders! Look for supplies to remain very good well into next week and with the finish of the offshore deal the demand will pick back up. Offshore cantaloupe supplies from both Guatemala and Honduras look to be all but finished by the end of this week. There will still be light supplies in Florida at the beginning of next week, but limited to availability and subject to shipping point quality. Shippers are still looking to move fruit from the Eastern ports and pricing is aggressive. Quality is still decent for offshore fruit.
- **Honeydews:** The market remains at lower levels on Honeydews again this week, and even with Nogales finishing their spring crop, The offshore supplies on honeydews look to be finished by the end of this week and the CA/AZ desert growing areas are slowly taking over. The market should remain steady for the end of this week and depending on demand pressure could stay that way into the beginning of next week. New crop quality is very good!

ONIONS

Texas is still recovering from the weekend rain but should have better supplies by tomorrow. Imperial Valley California has good supplies currently available. Huron, California should start up with limited supplies next week. Washington still has some limited availability of storage onions.

POTATOES

The quality is still very good on the Idaho storage crop. Wisconsin is becoming more limited with availability. Colorado has good supplies and quality is still good. Colored storage potatoes are loading out of North Dakota and Wisconsin. Washington has all but finished. California new crop colored potatoes available with very good quality. New crop California Russets should start next month. Northern and Southern Florida now with availability on new crop colored potatoes.

SQUASH

- **Eastern Squash:** With Florida finished on squash and Georgia experiencing heavy rain and below average temps, the supplies will become very limited in the coming weeks. Already gaining strength, the market will continue to rise. Quality has been good up to this point but we can expect to see issues related to the wet weather at the end of next week.

STONE FRUIT

California tree fruit numbers continue to increase with warmer spring weather prevailing. Yellow/White Peaches, Yellow/White Nectarines, Apricots and Cherries are available in good supply, especially in the smaller sizing. Early production is very good and color is excellent. There is high colored good eating fruit available and FOB prices are coming down. Cherry quality is very good and sizing is large (peaking on 9/10 ROW). Supplies will continue to increase to finish the week on all fruit.



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TOMATOES

- **Eastern:** Tomato production in Florida has slowed a bit due to recent rain. We should see a rebound in production by next week but we can expect some quality defects from the rain. Roma tomatoes will be in the same situation due to the weather.

WATERMELONS

Watermelon supplies remain light in both the seeded and seedless fruit. The Mexico deal has wrapped up and the CA/AZ desert areas are not quite ready yet. The new crop areas will not make an impact on supplies until next week, possibly even beyond that depending on weather. The market has strengthened on seedless and will be strong to finish the week. Demand is very good for all watermelons.

VALUE ADDED

The lettuce has had much better weights and this has caused processors to purchase fewer products. Hence, there is more availability for carton business. Some light bruising reported on chopped romaine. Complaints have been minimal on green onions. The warm weather we had last weekend could create quality issues.

PRODUCE SPOTLIGHT

GARBANZO BEAN or CECI or CHANNA or CHICKPEA

One of the oldest cultivated legume species known, garbanzos go back as far as 5,400 B.C.E. in the Near East. While high in carbohydrate, their nutty flavor, minimal fat, nutrition and versatile culinary qualities have pushed garbanzos to the forefront in American cooking over the past 30 years—not just in hummus, minestrone and salads but in the ever-expanding vegetarian cuisine. They are pale and light brown and are used whole, popular in North Indian, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisine. In North India they are made into the popular chola/channa masala (chili) dish and are made into fritters. In the Middle East they are made into hummus, falafel, and added to pilafs. In North Africa they are added to couscous. Now they have found their way into Mexican, Cuban and other Latin American cuisines. Garbanzo is also available as chickpea powder.



Chickpeas are a helpful source of [zinc](#), [folate](#) and [protein](#).^{[1][11][12]} They are also very high in [dietary fiber](#) and hence a healthy source of [carbohydrates](#) for persons with [insulin](#) sensitivity or [diabetes](#). Chickpeas are low in fat and most of this is [polyunsaturated](#). One hundred grams of mature boiled chickpeas contains 164 calories, 2.6 grams of fat (of which only 0.27 grams is saturated), 7.6 grams of dietary fiber and 8.9 grams of protein. Chickpeas also provide dietary [calcium](#) (49–53 mg/100 g), with some sources citing the garbanzo's calcium content as about the same as yogurt and close to milk. According to the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics chickpea seeds contain on average:

- 23% protein
- 64% total carbohydrates (47% starch, 6% soluble sugar)
- 5% fat
- 6% crude fiber
- 3% ash

There is also a high reported mineral content:

- phosphorus (340 mg/100 g)
- calcium (190 mg/100 g)
- magnesium (140 mg/100g)
- iron (7 mg/100 g)
- zinc (3 mg/100 g)



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Healthy Eating

Boost Fiber to Slim Down

The average American adult gains one to two pounds each year, according to various reports. But new research in *The Journal of Nutrition* suggests a way to prevent this weight gain or even encourage weight loss—without dieting. The secret: eat more fiber. Researchers at Brigham Young University in Utah followed the eating habits of 252 middle-aged women for nearly two years and found that those who increased their fiber intake generally lost weight. Women who decreased the fiber in their diets gained. The scientists boiled the findings into a single weight-loss formula: **boosting fiber by 8 grams for every 1,000 calories consumed resulted in losing about 4½ pounds** over the course of the study. And this held true whether a woman was eating 3 or 25 grams of fiber a day at the start of the study. While it helps you feel full, “fiber has no calories,” says Larry Tucker, Ph.D., lead researcher and professor in the Department of Exercise Sciences at Brigham Young. So if you fill up on high-fiber foods you crowd out less-healthy foods, explains Tucker. Try it for yourself. If you’re consuming 2,000 calories per day, aim to increase your fiber by 16 grams.

The Whole-Grain Truth

The 2005 USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend that adults consume around six ounces of grains daily, and that we make half those grains whole. That means about three ounces of whole grains a day. Depending on the grains we choose, that could be between 1½ and 3 cups.

A whole-grain kernel starts with three parts: the bran, the germ and the endosperm. When these kernels are heavily processed or refined, they no longer remain whole. Most of the bran and some of the germ is removed, resulting in the loss of fiber as well as a multitude of vitamins, minerals and other health-promoting phytonutrients. Although manufacturers “enrich” refined grains by adding back iron and three B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin and niacin), this does not add back all of the whole-grain benefits.

We have good reason to be on the prowl for those benefits. People who eat plenty of whole grains tend to be leaner and have a lower risk of heart disease than those who don’t. This is probably because whole grains contain antioxidants, phytoestrogens and phytosterols that are protective against coronary disease. The fiber in whole grains also has its benefits, and most of us fail to get the amount of fiber recommended for a healthy diet: 38 grams per day for men, 25 for women. Fiber promotes regularity and lowers the risk of developing diabetes and heart disease. But the whole-grain/fiber connection isn’t perfect. While most whole grains are high in fiber, some, like the whole-grain corn in the cereal that baffled me, are not. For maximum health, a cereal with both whole grain and high fiber makes the best sense.

How do you know when you’ve found the right cereal?

First, check the ingredients to make sure that the word “whole” describes the grains that come first in the list. Then move up to the nutrition facts label and look for at least five grams of fiber per serving. Next come calories. One popular granola, although a decent source of whole grains and fiber, has an exorbitant 528 calories per cup, most from added fats and sugars. I opt for cereals with around 200 or less calories per serving and a sugar content less than 12 grams. As for taste, you’ll have to try them.