



MARCH 9th 2009

**Individual commitment to a group effort -- that is what makes a team work,
a company work, a society work, a civilization work.**

Author: Vince Lombardi

Restaurant Spotlight



Jason's deli, a fast-casual restaurant started in 1976, has been perfecting the new deli concept with an old family atmosphere for over 30 years. Started by a group of family members who had grown up around good food and excellent service, they wanted nothing more than to carry that tradition forward. What started out as a single location in Beaumont, TX, Jason's is now fast approaching 200 delis in 25 states. Jason's has made a commitment to their customers by expanding their organic and healthy menu items, and has also removed all Trans Fats, MSG, and high fructose corn syrup from all menu items. In fact, Jason's was recently named the #2 Healthiest Restaurant by Health Magazine! Jason's cutting edge philosophy and market savvy extends beyond their food, as they can be found on social networking sites Flickr, Twitter and YouTube.



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COMMODITY REPORT

APPLES/PEARS

Plentiful supplies of apples remain for Controlled Atmosphere fruit. Washington remains the leading production area for apples and will so through the spring and summer months. Regional production areas including Michigan and New York continue shipping light supplies of storage apples; demand remains light for those. Washington and Oregon Pears continue production from storage including mainly the Anjou, Bosc and Golden Bosc varieties.

ASPARAGUS

This market continues to be steady. Supplies have lightened out of Mexico slightly. California production has started. Mexican jumbo sizes are on the lighter side. Peruvian asparagus continues to produce stronger production numbers into the East Coast.

AVOCADO

- **Mexican fruit** – Mexican shipments are doing well coming into the states. Supplies are adequate. Demand continues to be good.
- **Chilean Fruit** - Chilean season is ending. Supplies are very limited.

BELL PEPPERS

- **Eastern Bells:** Cool, windy weather in Florida's growing region coupled with diminishing supplies as transition begins is creating a tight market on bell peppers. Expect the market on bells to continue as such through next week.

BERRIES

- **Strawberries:** California strawberry production continues this week with lower than expected production. There is anticipation of some rain (60% chance) to fall in the Oxnard growing area but growers/shippers are not too concerned. Most shippers are expressing that they will not be too badly affected and should have decent production toward the middle to the end of the week (weather pending). Florida production is starting off low due to continuing cooler temps over the weekend and into this week, but shippers are anticipating better volume towards the end of this week (weather pending). McAllen crossings are coming to an end, with the exception of Driscolls, who has expressed that they will continue as far into March as possible (quality permitting). We will have a much better idea of how production is going to continue in California as the storms progress through the week.
- **Raspberries** Raspberry production continues tight this week due to diminished transfers from Chile and Mexico. There has been some local California production, but with the past and current light rain patterns, the numbers have fallen greatly. Quality has been affected with California production. We can expect tight supplies for the foreseeable future.
- **Blackberries:** Blackberry production is slowing down with less transfers arriving from Mexico. There are some shippers in much better shape than others but definitely less product than in previous weeks.
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- **Blueberries:** Blueberry transfers are slowing down from Chile and some shippers are looking for higher fobs. We are seeing less fruit arriving on vessels, and taking longer to be released. There is one more vessel expected to land March 11th and some shippers are expressing that we may see the end of Chilean product by the first week of March. There are small quantities of local Californian blues with great size and quality (under hoops).

BROCCOLI

This market is steady for now. Rainy weather could change this market next week. The cold weather has left suppliers in fair production numbers but demand has fallen. Although pricing is stable this market could turn around next week. Mexico continues to produce good production numbers on Asian crowns with excellent quality. Some of the production in from Honduras and a reasonable Nogales market should keep the prices at current levels for the next several days.

CARROTS

California carrots have moved into new fields in Imperial Valley. Size is running small right now as cool weather has slowed growth. This has lighted supplies of jumbo sized carrots. Size is expected to come back in 2 to 3 weeks. Quality remains good. Georgia has good availability and quality on the East Coast.

CAULIFLOWER

This market has some suppliers in better availability than others. Demand is off. Some defects showing up include black spotting and yellowing upon arrivals. Expect pricing to get stronger towards the end of the week with most suppliers.

CELERY

The market continues to get softer on this commodity. Good supplies of celery currently exist in Oxnard and Yuma. Business continues to be slow in the industry.

CITRUS

- **Lemon:** Supplies remain very good on 95's thru 140's. There are good supplies of 165's, with 200's being a little on the tight side.
- **Oranges:** Harvesting has returned to normal in the Valley. In the long term, look for good supplies of Navels available through March. Peak sizes are 48's through 88's.

CUCUMBERS

- **Eastern Cucumbers:** The cucumber market is easing just a bit. A steady flow of containers from Honduras and a reasonable Nogales market should keep the prices at current levels for the next several days.



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COMMODITY REPORT CONTINUED

GRAPES

Red seedless grapes are tightening up and will remain tight for the next 10-14 days. Flames are finishing, there are only light supplies of Ruby red seedless and Crimsons are late coming on. A few Crimson red seedless could be available by weeks end, but only in limited supply. Demand also looks to remain strong for all red seedless. Green seedless supplies are very good this week and will be for another 10-14 days. There are currently only light supplies of Black seedless and seeded Red Globes, and overall grape quality remains very good.

GREEN ONIONS

This market continues to be stable. Supplies continue to be excellent out of the Mexico growing region. The market remains steady with very inexpensive prices. Defects have been minimal.

KIWI

Italian Kiwi supplies are decent and demand is only moderate. Quality remains very good and with the fair demand the market will remain unchanged.

LEAF LETTUCE

This market is currently stable. Some suppliers are much better off with romaine supplies. Supplies on green leaf have lowered in production numbers. Most shippers are ahead of their projected harvesting times on the leaf fields. Quality continues to be average. Quality defects continue to include epidermal peel, fringe burn, tip burn, and wind burn. This market should be stable for the remainder of the week.

LETTUCE

The lettuce market continues to be stable. Suppliers have enough product to cover orders but availability is average at best. With demand slow across the nation, look for this market to be stable over the next few days, minimum. There have been reports of epidermal peel due to the lettuce ice from last week.

MELONS

- **Cantaloupes:** Demand has picked up, especially in the larger sizes and retailers have played a significant part in shrinking inventories. Smaller sizes will be the better deal now, and that will be the case for the next 7-10 days. Shippers continue to look for movement and quality remains very good.
- **Honeydews:** Very good supplies remain on most all sizes and on both coasts. Volume concentrations will be in the smaller sized melons (6 & 8ct) and that is where the deals are. Quality will remain very good!

ONIONS

Quality on storage onions continues to be good with the exception of translucency that typically starts showing up at this time in the season. If this is just in the first few layers of the onion it can be rectified with lots of air flow through the onions to help dry them out. There are still good supplies of all colors and sizes of onions in Idaho and Washington. Idaho will have product available through the end of April. Mexican product is now in Texas with good supplies of all colors, quality is good. Texas onions will be available in the next couple of weeks

POTATOES

Most shippers are back into packing both Norkotahs and Burbanks. The market is steady but 70ct and #2-10oz remain very snug. We are trying to get all requests for a particular varietal fulfilled, by time of shipment Burbanks and/or Norkotahs may be the only product available. Wisconsin and Colorado still have good supplies and quality. Colored potatoes are loading out of North Dakota and Wisconsin with Washington cleaning up for the season. California has good quality and supplies of colored potatoes.

SQUASH

- **Eastern Squash:** Despite warm sunny weather in Florida, the yellow squash market continues to hold at the higher levels as there is strong demand from both coasts. Quality has been fair. Green squash should remain at current levels for several days.

TOMATOES

- **Eastern:** Tomato production in Florida is lower than Mexico but demand is keeping the playing field level. There has been no major upswing to pricing even with lower production. Cooler weather is slowing production and growth. There seems to be more of the bigger fruit than smaller due to the fact that smaller fruit has been affected by the recent cold temps more so than the larger fruit.

WATERMELONS

Good supplies continue for seedless watermelons from Mexico and there is a larger size spectrum available. Quality continues to improve and the market has leveled off to finish this week. Honduras is also importing Seedless Watermelons and quality is very good there as well loading out of Florida and light supplies in L.A. There are a few more seeded watermelons available from Mexico as well and the market remains steady.



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Weather:

Growing regions of Arizona will be experiencing a slight chance of showers through Saturday morning bringing some cooler temperatures. The Central Coast of California is expecting showers tonight clearing by Thursday afternoon. Florida will be getting a little reprieve from the cold weather with temperatures returning to about normal. Keep up to date on current weather throughout the US as it will affect crops into early spring.

SUPER FOODS: TOMATOES

Many people feel certain that there's going to be bad news along with the good news when they learn that the tomato is a SuperFood. Of course, they like tomatoes, they think, but in many locations tomatoes are only tasty for a couple of months each year. Well, there's good news and more good news about tomatoes. Not only do they pack a nutritional wallop, but you can enjoy their benefits all year long. That's because their power is available in processed tomatoes. The spaghetti sauce and taco sauce that you love, along with that slice of pizza and even, yes, ketchup and barbeque sauce, all have the power of tomatoes. So, no matter where you live, it's easy to get more tomatoes into your diet and begin to enjoy their considerable benefits.

The Power of Red

Lycopene, a member of the carotenoid family and a pigment that contributes to the red color of tomatoes, is a major contributor to their health promoting power. Lycopene has demonstrated a range of unique and distinct biological properties that have intrigued scientists. Some researchers have come to believe that lycopene could be as powerful an antioxidant as beta-carotene. We do know that lycopene is the most efficient quencher of the free-radical singlet oxygen, a particularly deleterious form of oxygen, and lycopene is also capable of scavenging a large number of free radicals.

Lycopene is a nutrient whose time in the spotlight has come. It's been the subject of great interest lately as more and more researchers have focused on the particular power of this nutrient. The attention began in the 1980s when studies started to reveal that people who ate large amounts of tomatoes were far less likely to die from all forms of cancer compared with those who ate little or no tomatoes. Many other studies echoed the positive findings about the effect of eating tomatoes.

While lycopene has received a lot of attention recently, tomatoes are rich in a wide variety of nutrients, which seem to work synergistically to promote health and vitality. Low in calories, high in fiber, and high in potassium, tomatoes are not only a rich source of lycopene. They are also a source of beta-carotene, alpha-carotene, and various polyphenols. They contain small amounts of B vitamins (thiamine, pantothenic acid, vitamin B6, and niacin), as well as folate, vitamin E, magnesium, manganese, and zinc. It's the synergy of this multitude of nutrients, as well as the special power of lycopene, that boosts tomatoes to a spot in the all-star SuperFood pantheon.

Believe it or not!

The processed tomatoes—sauce and paste—are more effective than raw tomatoes at reducing cancer risk. In the raw tomato, the lycopene is bound into the cell walls and fiber. Processing breaks down these cell walls and frees the lycopene to be absorbed by the body. Ounce for ounce, processed tomato products and cooked tomatoes contain two to eight times the available lycopene of raw tomatoes. While processing does diminish the levels of vitamin C in the tomatoes, it elevates the total antioxidant activity, thus ultimately providing an enhanced benefit.

Fruit or vegetable?

It should be noted that tomatoes are not really vegetables. Botanically classified as a fruit, they are the seed-bearing portions of a flowering plant. However, in 1893, a case came before the Supreme Court of the United States relating to shipping tariffs on tomatoes. Should farmers pay fruit or vegetable rates on them? The Court came down on the side of vegetables, and so vegetables they became.