



**November 24th, 2008**

### **Dining out Spotlight**



A Marriot Property

Retreat to the beautiful rolling hills of a Birmingham, Alabama hotel secluded from everyday cares, yet close to a vibrant city at the Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa. Nestled among a quintessential American resort town, this Birmingham, Alabama hotel embodies comfortable sophistication and the casual elegance of a royal retreat. The plush guest rooms at this Hoover, Alabama hotel include balconies overlooking stunning grounds and a signature pool featuring enchanting waterfalls and fountains. Boasting the third longest golf course in the world, this Birmingham, Alabama resort features a Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail course highlighted by sweeping majestic views of the surrounding foothills. Stimulate your senses at the lavish 12,000 square foot European spa, exclusively designed to ensure complete relaxation and tranquility. Experience Renaissance Ross Bridge and discover a delightful escape at this remarkable resort town and luxury hotel in Birmingham, Alabama.

4000 Grand Ave  
Hoover, Alabama 35226  
Phone: 205-916-7677  
Fax: 205-949-3077  
Sales: 205-949-3006  
Toll Free: 800-593-6419



## COMMODITY REPORT

### APPLES/PEARS

With projections for as much as 10% increases over last year, there are plentiful supplies of apples available. Quality is very good throughout the new crop coming from storage in Washington State. Washington also continues to harvest Fuji and Pink Lady, but winter weather patterns, if severe, will have a limiting affect on supplies for long term storage. Fall weather patterns including cold temperatures and rain will start to affect regional apple production areas as well including Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Michigan, New York and North Carolina. Currently there is still very good availability there. California is still packing from storage, including the Granny Smith and Pink Lady varieties, but will be finished by the end of November. Washington and Oregon Pears continue production with the Bartlett, Anjou, Bosc, Golden Bosc and several other varietal pears.

### ASPARAGUS

Mexico continues to have light supplies while the predominance of product is coming in from Peru. Expect Peruvian product to be in good supply over the next two to four weeks. Extra large and jumbo sizing continues to be on the tight side.

### BELL PEPPERS

**Eastern Bells:** Despite extremely cold temperatures in the southeast, the pepper market has been starting to loosen up. Expect a very slow but steady drop in prices as Florida continues to come into better volume.

### BERRIES

- **Strawberries:** Strawberry production this week in California continues on the tight side due to unseasonably warm growing conditions in the south. Oxnard has experienced warm temperatures in the 80's – 90's accompanied with high Santa Anna winds. We can expect ripe berries with bruising. All shippers are lowering estimates daily
- **Raspberries:** Raspberry production continues steady with. Mexican product steady with reports of quality good to occasionally fair. We can expect to see more volume filter up as Mexican production continues with South America soon to follow.
- **Blackberries:** Blackberry production from Mexico is up to speed with consistent transfers from Mexico and Guatemala landing two to three times a week into Miami and Mexican product into Los Angeles.
- **Blueberries:** Shippers are cutting back on how much product they are bringing up and some shippers are making moves to clean up on what inventory they are sitting on. We can expect some kind of a gap as shippers stop flying product up and start shipping up on boats.

### BROCCOLI

Salinas will have production through the week with supplies on the light side Demand has increased on both bunched and crown cartons. Santa Maria production is light and Yuma will start next week with production

### CAULIFLOWER

Demand is much stronger as compared to the previous week. Many suppliers are lighter in availability due to the holiday pull. Yuma has started harvesting cauliflower. Currently, there are three growing regions harvesting cauliflower. The Yuma acreage is down this season. Expect pricing to fluctuate throughout the season in Yuma.

### CELERY

This commodity is getting active as we head towards the holiday pull. Oxnard production is much stronger. Salinas will finish up their production in the next week or two. For this week there will be ample availability of product in both regions. This will help with trucks that are split with product in the different growing regions. Good quality is reported on celery production in Oxnard.

### CITRUS

- **Lemon:** Supplies are plentiful on all sizes except for 95ct. Quality and condition are good.
- **Oranges:** Supplies of Valencia's are day to day as shippers are packing if demand dictates. Navels are going with all shippers. Quality is very good. Volume is peaking on 72ct, 88ct, 113ct.

### CUCUMBERS

**Eastern Cucumbers:** Cucumbers remain extremely tight in the East. A prolonged spell of cool temperatures combined with an already dwindling supply out of Georgia has created some high markets.

### GRAPES

Central Valley grape production continues very strong, especially in the Crimson red seedless variety. There looks to be available supplies of red seedless through as late as the end of December. However, with shorter daylight hours and colder temperatures, the red seedless grapes will start to show lighter colors on arrival. Take nothing away from the quality and sugar levels though as they will still be very strong! Thompson green are now in all 16# long storage foam cartons for quality fruit that will travel.

### LEAF LETTUCE

The Salinas valley will wind down its production this week and Yuma will be going next week with most of the other suppliers that are not down in Yuma this week. Leaf in Huron will finish up this week also. Early reports have Yuma production having lots of leaf showing slight tip burn.



## COMMODITY REPORT CONTINUED

### LETTUCE

Salinas's production as well as Huron production is finishing up. A strong pull could make lettuce availability tight towards the end of the week. Strong winds in the Yuma region this past week region has caused some damage to the outer wrapper leaves of this commodity.

### MELONS

- **Cantaloupes** – Arizona Desert and Mexico production continues very light and Arizona will most likely will finish within the next 10-12 days! There are limited supplies of offshore (Honduras)\* fruit already available out of Florida, Expect overall Cantaloupe supplies to remain light for the next 2-3 weeks with the finish of the desert and offshore supplies getting ramped up.
- **Honeydews** -. Heavy supplies from Mexico, Arizona and now offshore fruit arriving from Central America as well as light demand have the market holding at low levels. Overall production on Honeydews excellent and will continue that way through this week. Sugar levels will continue to be very sporadic, but overall fruit quality is still very good!

### SQUASH

**Eastern Squash:** The squash market should hold at the higher levels for several more days as Florida struggles to produce enough volume to offset the supply shortage in Georgia.

### TOMATOES

**Eastern:** Adverse weather has contributed to a stronger market than the west. Northern FL. looks to be out of the picture due to much early rain, this will definitely have an effect and put great pressure on Nogales/McAllen when they start crossing. We are expecting Palmetto / Ruskin to start producing decent volume in approximately one week but weather has been cooler than normal keeping production very slow in Palmetto / Ruskin.



## INDUSTRY NEWS

### ***Boosting Calcium in Carrots—and Other Veggies***

Thanks to research at the [USDA-ARS](#) Children's Nutrition Research Center (CNRC) in Houston, Texas, led by professor of pediatrics Kendal Hirschi, carrots have been modified to contain more calcium—and this research can potentially be used to add calcium to other crops. The current U.S. recommended average intake of calcium for adults aged 19 to 50 is about 1,000 milligrams daily, and milk is one of the richest sources of calcium. Inadequate dietary calcium, however, is a global concern, particularly in parts of the world that don't have access to dairy products or where large segments of the population are lactose intolerant or consume a vegetarian diet.

Increasingly, dietary recommendations around the world emphasize the value of adequate intake of plant-based foods. But one major potential problem with shifting to a plant-based diet is that doing so could further reduce consumption of essential nutrients, such as calcium. Insufficient intake of calcium may lead to osteoporosis, one of the world's most prevalent nutritional disorders. It's a condition that reduces bone mineral density and leads to fragile bones in later life. Doctors usually prescribe calcium supplements and exercise, but better calcium uptake and absorption from foods would also have a significant positive global impact on this disease.

Poor diets and exercise habits prevent many people from achieving and maintaining optimal bone health in the United States and elsewhere. To help combat this, Hirschi modified carrots by giving them a gene—from the model plant *Arabidopsis thaliana*—that encodes a calcium transporter. CNRC professor of pediatrics Steve Abrams was involved in the subsequent human feeding studies. CNRC plant biologists helped in modifying foods, other than carrots, to have increased calcium levels.

Hirschi notes that CNRC, which is operated by Baylor College of Medicine in cooperation with Texas Children's Hospital and the Agricultural Research Service, provides a unique research environment. There, it's possible for scientists to generate genetically modified plants and then conduct careful feeding studies with mice and human volunteers, all in the same building—a one-of-a-kind operation needed for this type of work.

While carrots already contain some calcium, it is very minimal. That means that no one could ever eat enough regular carrots to meet the recommended level of calcium. The goal of the research was to induce carrots to express increased levels of the gene *sCAX1*, which enables transport of calcium across plant cell membranes. The ultimate goal is to make not only carrots, but also other vegetables and fruits, better sources of calcium. Further, the knowledge gained from this proof-of-principle research helps scientists understand molecular factors that influence plant nutrient bioavailability. "We are always looking at ways to increase the nutrient content in foods," says Hirschi, who has been working on this type of research for the past 7 years. "This is the first time a genetically enhanced food has been tested in clinical human feeding trials for increased nutrition, and the results were positive: We found we had indeed made a healthier carrot. Obviously, this is a prototype of what we want to develop in the future, but the early work is encouraging."

These findings, published in the January 2008 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, show that it's possible to improve the amount of bioavailable calcium in a staple food—such as carrots. When applied to a variety of fruits and vegetables, a strategy of increasing the calcium content of those foods that kids like to eat could lead to higher calcium consumption from plant foods alone. In addition to the nutritional benefits, modifying plant genes to increase calcium levels could also improve plant productivity and extend product shelf life. That's because calcium has long been used to combat many post harvest issues. For example, apples are immersed in a calcium solution to maintain their firmness during shipping and prolong their shelf life afterwards.

By [Alfredo Flores](#), Agricultural Research Service Information Staff.  
Source: PMA Headline News