



**Del Bene
PRODUCE**

Market Update

For the week ending March 17, 2018

SUGGESTED BUYS:

Asparagus, corn, pea pods, tomatoes, cantaloupes, strawberries and oranges

TIGHT AND EXPENSIVE:

Limes, broccolini, cauliflower, yellow squash, zucchini, iceberg and romaine lettuce, hedgehog mushrooms

NEW ON MARKET:

English peas, Rhubarb, Oroblanco,, yellowfoot chanterelles, black trumpets, green garlic, RPF spicy greens and savoy spinach

DELBENE PRODUCE FOOD SHOW

Monday, March 12, 2018 – 11-4pm | The Eastern: Detroit, 3434 Russell Street, Detroit, MI 48207

Join us for our first ever food show. Learn about the services we offer and meet the farmers, vendors and producers we partner with. Enjoy snacks, chef demos, giveaways, and prizes. Visit delbeneproduce.com/foodshow to RSVP and contact your sales representative for more information. We hope to see you there!

ASPARAGUS: MARKET UP

Peak production continues for the top growing areas in Mexico – Caborca and San Luis – although prices have increased in consecutive weeks. Recent cooler temperatures have temporarily slowed production. However, warmer temperatures are forecasted for the next ten days, which should help harvest numbers recover. Domestic production has started with multiple shippers in Gonzales, California, however, this area is also being affected by cooler temperatures with more rain in the forecast. This will be the beginning of the domestic and local season; these growers should peak in mid-March and will continue through early May. Once we hit May, we'll be able to enjoy warmer weather and start talking about Michigan asparagus – the kick-off to Michigan's growing season. Overall, prices and quality are holding steady despite inclement weather in the growing areas.

BERRIES: Blueberries and Blackberries – MARKET DOWN

Strawberries – There are no significant changes in the strawberry market this week, but rain is in the forecast for the California growing regions this weekend. This will more than likely have an adverse effect on harvest volumes and perhaps quality for the second half of March. Oxnard and Santa Maria are forecast to receive around a half an inch of rain this weekend and persistent light showers throughout the week. Temperatures in Florida have risen over recent weeks, but like California, rain and cooler temperatures are expected for this upcoming week. Depending on the severity of the rain, this could bring an early end to the Florida season. Prices should remain lower on Florida berries with shippers trying to get rid of product, which will show signs of bruising with occasional soft berries. Production in Mexico is also winding down with an end to the season expected within the next two weeks.

Blueberries – Shipments from Chile are decreasing with each passing week with the season ending soon. Mexico continues to produce consistent numbers with nice quality, which should stay that way for the next month or so. Prices on Mexican blueberries are slightly higher than Chile, but quality has been better. Santa Maria and Oxnard have kicked off the domestic production with only light supplies due to weather. Supplies should improve by the early part of April. Florida is also expected to begin its season by the end of March with Georgia soon to follow by mid to late April.

Blackberries – Supplies are showing slight improvement but are still limited overall. This is mostly because of cooler and rainy weather in both California and Mexico. California is expected to bounce back and improve domestic production within three weeks. The same is expected for the Mexican growing areas. The overall market has been commanding higher prices with fair quality.

Raspberries – Mexico remains in its lowest production point of the year, while cooler temps are causing a late start to the domestic season. Both Mexico and California are expected to ramp up in the next few weeks. Quality has been very nice throughout the lower production period.

LEMONS: MARKET DOWN

We continue to see encouraging signs for the lemon market, with some product still available from the San Joaquin Valley. Most of the supplies, however, are being pulled from the Oxnard Ventura growing area, which has improved availability of both choice grade and smaller sized lemons.

LIMES: EXTREME MARKET

General supplies are still difficult to come by, let alone supplies of good quality. Mexico is seeing an uptick in production, but no improvement in overall quality because of rain and cooler temperatures. The higher quality limes are commanding a premium compared to lower grade fruit as availability is limited. More rain is expected to hit over the next week. This leaves no relief in sight for the lime market for the next two weeks.

LETTUCE: MARKETS UP

Weather conditions and short supplies remain the story for the overall lettuce market: especially iceberg, leaf and romaine. The temperatures in the desert growing region (Yuma, AZ) have dropped from above average to near freezing in a very narrow timeframe. In addition, the southern California growing areas have not harvested for the past week, also because of weather. Currently, the iceberg market does not seem to be affected as severely as romaine. With the colder temperatures comes quality issues such as misshapen heads, decay, blister and peel, and frost damage. Production and pricing are expected to be volatile for at least the next few weeks.

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