



**Del Bene**  
PRODUCE

# Market Update

For the week ending March 9, 2019

## **SUGGESTED BUYS:**

Asparagus, artichokes, avocados, English cucumbers, pea pods, snap peas, tomatoes, blueberries

## **TIGHT AND EXPENSIVE:**

Celery, broccoli, cauliflower, iceberg lettuce, bell peppers, figs, red fresno peppers

## **NEW ON MARKET:**

California orchard morels, rhubarb, parsley root, cotton candy grapes, black sapphire grapes, yellow meat watermelon

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## **ASPARAGUS: MARKET UP**

Despite approaching the peak of the Mexican growing season, recent yields are below average because of recent cold weather. The forecast for the weekend is promising however, with warmer nights and afternoons expected to improve supplies. Availability was lighter to begin this week, but should change by next week. Demand is holding steady industry wide. Considering all of these factors, asparagus remains a good buy with excellent quality and reasonable prices.

## **BELL PEPPERS: MARKETS UP**

*Green Peppers* – After a few consecutive weeks of good availability and lower prices, the green bell pepper market has jumped back up again. Supplies are steady coming out of Florida and new fields will be opening in another few weeks. Overall demand has picked back up with recent prices coming back down to normal. The other contributing factor to market prices rising is the decreased supplies coming from Mexico. Cold temperatures in the Sonora and Sinaloa growing areas over the past week has slowed down production. The price increase should be short lived with forecasts calling for warmer temps next week.

*Colored Peppers* – Colored bell peppers are in extremely short supply this week. Prices have spiked due to limited crossings coming over from Mexico. Cooler weather in the growing areas coupled with growing area transitions are the main factors driving the strong market.

## **BERRIES: Strawberries and Blueberries – MARKET UP; Blackberries – MARKET DOWN**

*Strawberries* – The overall market remains unsettled as product continues to come from Florida, Mexico, and California. Prices are holding at reasonable levels this week, but the market will gain strength throughout March. California is struggling with extreme shortages resulting from cold or rainy weather. Volume from Santa Maria is way down as growers are stripping down plants from frost or rain damaged fruit – more rain is in the forecast. Oxnard is also seeing decreased volumes from colder weather, rain, and freezing temperatures. More rain is forecasted for this area as well. Florida was doing well, but concerns moving forward are regarding higher than normal temperatures affecting the berry output. Mexico is expecting the same over the next couple of weeks with hot temperatures in the forecast and potential quality issues.

*Blueberries* – Good volume and consistent shipments from Chile and Mexico are continuing to keep the blueberry market steady with nice quality product. The main shipping points are Florida, California, Texas, and Arizona. Prices will remain quite affordable for the later part of February as well as early March.

*Blackberries* – Steady supplies are coming from Mexico and allowing for prices to adjust downward. This could change as we move into March with production and shipments both expected to decline.

*Raspberries* – Steady supplies crossing over from Mexico have allowed prices to drop slightly. Market prices will continue to fluctuate around current levels depending on border crossings each week. Short term shortages are possible if crossings are delayed, but there are no signs in any supply disruptions right now. Quality has been excellent on all incoming supplies.

## **BROCCOLI/CAULIFLOWER: Broccoli – MARKET UP; Cauliflower – MARKET EXTREME**

*Broccoli* – Availability and pricing continue to tighten because of the recent rain and cold weather that hit the Yuma growing area. Forecasts for next week are in the 70s, which should help production rebound slightly. Quality has been good.

*Cauliflower* – There is an extreme demand exceeds supply situation with yields down significantly in Yuma due to the colder weather. Quality has been outstanding, but the growth process has slowed way down in the fields from the cold temperatures. This will last at least another two weeks until warmer weather hits the growing areas at which point, the market should drop quickly.

## **CELERY: MARKET EXTREME**

There is no relief in sight for an already tight celery market. We are expecting to see high prices and quality issues for the next month. Overall volume out of Oxnard, CA is down 10% due to above average rain and wind limiting the amount of product harvested.

Consequently, the price of celery sticks is also on the rise. In addition, the crop out of Mexico is also yielding below average numbers because of colder temperatures. Finally, Florida's crop is down as much as 20% also because of excessive rain.

## **LETTUCE: MARKETS UP**

*Iceberg* – Demand significantly exceeds supplies as we head into March. Like other products coming from Yuma, AZ, iceberg growth has slowed down tremendously due to cold weather and rain. There is a supply gap from all shippers and is expected to last at least two weeks. The weather is improving, but the damage to the plants has wreaked havoc on the market. Pre-cut lettuces are also increasing in price beginning on Monday. Industry wide quality issues include blister and peel and mechanical.

*Romaine* – Like iceberg, blister and peel are industry wide issues being reported on romaine and leaf lettuce and should remain prevalent throughout the remainder of the Yuma season. The quality issues on the whole product will be magnified in the chopped romaine. Shelf life will be shorter and we will see marginal quality for the next month to month and a half.

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## **RECOVERY PARK FARMS: LOCALLY GROWN IN DETROIT**

Knockout Mix (spicy greens) are in stock. Call your sales rep for details!