

Overview

We are seeing vast improvements on the majority of lettuce commodities. That being said, some prices are not yet back to normal but they are significantly lower. We saw another spike in cauliflower this week. Celery, lemons and oranges are still in very EXTREME Markets and we are seeing a shortage in supply.

Market Alert

- Avocados – **EXTREME**
- Asparagus – **LARGER SIZES**
- Blueberries- **EXTREME**
- Cauliflower- **ESCALATED**
- Celery- **EXTREME**
- Cilantro - **ESCALATED**
- Garlic - **EXTREME**
- Lemons- **SIZING**
- Oranges- **EXTREME**

Good Buy

STRAWBERRIES! With summer almost here strawberries are the perfect fruit to enjoy on a hot day! Strawberries are extremely high in folate, potassium, fiber, and magnesium which make them not only delicious but nutritious. Strawberries also contain high amounts of Vitamin-C which is great for your immune system and can help fight off any spring colds. They have been shown to fight high cholesterol due to their heart-healthy boosters, ellagic acid and flavonoids. Strawberries can be helpful to lose weight because they are low in sodium and contain only natural sugar. Try them in an easy smoothie or check out the recipe below for decadent panna cotta with a strawberry balsamic compote.

PANNA COTTA WITH STRAWBERRY BALSAMIC COMPOTE (MAKES 4 SERVINGS)

FOR THE PANNA COTTA:

- 1¼ teaspoons powdered gelatin (if you aren't using my homemade almond milk, you may need to increase the amount up to 2 teaspoons)
- 2 cups homemade vanilla almond milk
- 2 tablespoons grade B maple syrup
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

FOR THE STRAWBERRY BALSAMIC SAUCE (MAKES 1½ CUPS):

- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 cups hulled strawberries, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place two tablespoons of water in a small bowl. Sprinkle the gelatin on the surface, and let it bloom and rehydrate. Add almond milk, nutmeg, and salt. Whisk the mixture.
2. Pour the sweetened milk into the small saucepan and warm over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Remove milk from heat when it's steaming hot, but not boiling.
3. Pour gelatin into milk mixture and stir well to combine.
4. Place four six-ounce ramekins, teacups, or small mason jars onto a small rimmed baking tray. Ladle the milk into the containers. Allow cups to cool to room temperature and cover with plastic wrap. Place tray in the fridge and chill for at least 4 hours.
5. Heat the balsamic vinegar in a small saucepan over high heat. When it starts to bubble, turn the heat down to medium and simmer the vinegar until the volume is reduced by half.
6. When the balsamic vinegar is reduced, add the strawberries, honey, lemon juice, vanilla, and salt. Simmer for 15 minutes. Use an immersion blender to puree some of the sauce, leaving some chunky.
7. When you're ready to serve the panna cotta, top each cup with a heaping spoonful of the berry sauce.

Transportation

Trucks are in good supply in California, Arizona, Washington and Texas. Freight rates are firm. Availability has tightened in Florida; also Eastern Oregon.

Weather

The seven-day period of sunshine and above-average temperatures that began last weekend in the west will complete this cycle by Saturday. Highs this week have been in the 70's & 80's in coastal districts of California, 90's to 100 in the Central Valley, with Coachella and Northern Mainland Mexico reaching the mid-100's. This weekend will bring a significant cooling trend to all regions of California, Arizona and Northern Mexico, with highs dropping to the low 60's in California and 70's in the desert. Thundershowers are in the Sunday forecast for California districts. Rain is in the Thursday-Friday forecast for Central Florida and South Georgia, followed by clear skies this weekend. Highs will be in the 70's, warming to the 80's early next week.

Fruits & Vegetables

Avocados: **EXTREME MARKET** On the immediate horizon, we expect to see an active market through early May despite the Cinco De Mayo pull for retail already winding down. Long term market forecasts are still for the Winter Mexican crop to slow down faster than expected while Peru and California are slow to ramp up making late Spring a very active avocado market.

Bananas: Demand and quality are good and supply is steady.

Grapes: Supplies are improving and demand is lighter than expected. Sugraones and Flame pricing is down this week.

Kiwi: Supplies are good. We are still seeing slightly higher prices with quality being average.

Berries

Blueberries: **EXTREME** Production is increasing in Baja California and Oxnard; prices have eased. High prices and tight supplies continue for new crop blueberries in Georgia and North Carolina. The season is winding down in Central Mexico.

Blackberries: Blackberries will be in tight supply through this month as late-season production is on the decline in Central Mexico. The blackberry harvest in Salinas-Watsonville will begin in June.

Raspberries: Raspberries are in peak season production in Central Mexico and Southern California, with plentiful availability through mid-May. Central California growers are now harvesting as well.

Strawberries: Strawberries from Central and Southern California will be in good supply for Mother's Day. The size profile has increased with fields now yielding larger-sized berries. Stem strawberries have become available although supplies remain tight. Availability will be plentiful through this month.

California / Arizona Citrus

Navels: **EXTREME** Navels, 88S and smaller will be very limited and very light in supply until late MAY. Late season variety, 72/56/88 Quality is okay, expect some creasing and puff.

Lemons: **EXTREME**- Supplies of 140S, 165S and 200S continue to be **EXTREMELY** tight and prices are very high. Meyer lemons are available. Mostly large fruit available, 75/95/115. South American lemons are expected to start arriving late June and we will not see much improvement with lemons until June.

Limes: Limes are available, packing in Texas. Great quality and color.

Grapefruit: The California grapefruit market is increasing. Texas grapefruit is finishing up. California Star Ruby and White grapefruit is available.

Specialties: Minneola season is winding down with few small sizes available. Blood Oranges are in good supply and great color. Cara Caras will be finishing up first week of May. Ojai Pixie tangerines and Golden Nuggets are available. Halos will be available through May.

PINEAPPLE: Supply continues to be tight. Vessel delays have caused orders to be pushed back.

California Lettuce

Butter: Prices are down and supply is good.

Green and Red Leaf: Quality is improving. Prices are down and supply is much better.

Iceberg Lettuce: Supplies are good. Quality is much better and prices have come down a lot.

Romaine: Good supply. Quality has improved.

Romaine Hearts: Supplies are good, price are down. Quality is good.

Eastern and Western Vegetables

Green & Red Bell Peppers: We have good supplies of green bell peppers in Florida, Coachella, California and in Nogales from Mainland Mexico. Occasional bruising is present in the Florida product. Cool weather this weekend in Mexico will extend the season in Nogales through mid-May or later. Premium quality peppers are now coming from Coachella. Demand is strong for late-season red bells in Nogales and Coachella; tight availability will continue through mid-May.

Cucumbers: Recent hot weather has resulted in occasional quality issues for late-season cucumbers in Florida. The new crop harvest has begun in Georgia. Nogales will continue through the third week in May. The

harvest in Baja California will be in full swing by mid-May. Prices are generally steady, with cucumbers in the west selling at a premium compared to product in the east.

English Cucumber: Supplies from Eastern Canada are plentiful. Nogales shippers will have English Cucumbers through mid-May.

Green Beans: Supplies are tight with high prices in the east and west. No relief will occur until the harvest is up to full speed in Georgia and Coachella; hopefully by mid-May.

Zucchini & Yellow Squash: Zucchini and yellow squash are in good supply in all regions (Florida, Georgia, Coachella, and Nogales). Quality is good in all districts. Favorable (cool) weather will allow growers in Mexico to continue harvesting.

Herbs

Fresh herbs are very steady. Supplies are looking good on all herbs except **SAVORY** is still limited as it rebounds from the cold and heat we had over the past several weeks.

BASIL continues from our fields in Mexico and our local fields in California. We should be in full local production by the end of the month. The heavy rain this past winter did delay our planting.

HERB	SUPPLIES	QUALITY	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
Arugula	Good	Good	USA
Basil	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Opal Basil	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Thai Basil	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Bay Leaves	Good	Good	COLUMBIA
Chervil	Good	Good	USA
Chives	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Cilantro	Good	Good	USA
Dill	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Episode	Good	Good	MEXICO
Lemongrass	Good	Good	USA
Marjoram	Steady	Good	USA
Mint	Good	Good	USA
Oregano	Good	Good	USA
Italian Parsley	Good	Good	USA
Rosemary	Limited	Good	USA

Sage	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Savory	Good	Good	USA
Sorrel	Good	Good	USA
Tarragon	Good	Good	MEXICO
Thyme	Good	Good	USA
Lemon Thyme	Good	Good	USA
Lavender	Good	Good	USA
Lime Leaves	Good	Good	USA
Hora Santa	Good	Good	USA

Melons

Strong volumes continue for cantaloupe with a good mix of sizing currently. Overall volumes will quickly begin to decrease with next week's arrivals. Final arrivals are expected the week of 5/22. Quality remains at optimal levels with good color externally and brix levels in the 11-14% range.

Honeydew production still leans more to the 5s and larger but enough 6/8s are finding their way in to take care of regular business. Heavier volumes will also begin to taper off beginning the week of 5/8 with final arrivals hitting the week of 5/22.

Watermelon: Seedless varieties remain steady with regards to supply and pricing. We will begin to see a decline in supply next week as the offshore melon season begins to wind down. We anticipate about three more weeks of arrivals.

Mixed Vegetables

Artichokes: We are seeing very high prices and very short supply. Quality is good.

Arugula: Supplies of both baby and wild arugula are light but increasing.

Asparagus: EXTREME - Peru is currently experiencing rain and unusually high temperatures which have combined to slow the production of large caliber spears. The vast majority of product being harvested is in the STANDARD caliber measurements and production of LARGE, XL, AND JUMBO has declined dramatically. It is expected that this condition will persist at least until May 15th. Due to this unforeseen production problem, we will be forced to REDUCE program shipments of LARGE asparagus by 10% in hopes that this will enable us to cover the majority of program requirements.

Bok Choy: Quality is good and we are seeing some higher quotes on WGA cartons.

Broccoli: Prices are stable and supply is good. Quality is good.

Brussels Sprouts: Higher prices and tighter supplies remain but are leveling out. Quality is improving.

Carrots: There is a good supply with solid quality.

Cauliflower: ESCALATED MARKET we saw some improvement with this market but it spiked back up due to supplies being low. Prices are still somewhat high. Quality is good.

Celery: EXTREME unfortunately, we have not seen much improvement in this market. Prorates have been ranging between 35 %-50% this week. We are done in Yuma and the Oxnard crop is behind schedule. Quality is just fair. There will be issues for another 4-6 weeks.

Corn: Florida Sweet Corn is plentiful out of Florida and pricing is fair to good, making it good for promoting. Quality is outstanding and the outlook should hold steady all the way through Memorial Day.

Cilantro: ESCALATED Quality is variable as there is still yellowing with some decay. Price are high and we are seeing shortages.

Fennel: Supplies for the week will be light.

Garlic: EXTREME MARKET The overall supply of garlic is very, very tight.

Concerning Chinese imports, in February US Customs placed a hefty import duty (\$4.71/Kg) on one of the few Chinese shippers who historically had little to no duty. The 2016 Chinese crop was already less than normal. This additional factor has further lessened the amount of Chinese product available in the US market.

The new 2017 Chinese supply should be available in the US around late June. In regards to our domestic supply, we are certainly tighter than we would like to be. As expected, the peeling recoveries are a percentage or two lower as the crop is getting a little older. We are still a few months off from the new 2017 California crop. Two weeks ago, we did start to see some initial cloves forming in the heads, which is normal. However, in general the crop looks to be a little behind schedule. Yesterday and today the weather in our area (Bakersfield, CA) is around 100°F. If it continues to stay this hot it will help speed up the development of the garlic.

Ginger: Chinese ginger is in good supply. It is being offered at a substantial discount compared to ginger from Brazil.

Green Cabbage: Green cabbage has improved, supplies are good and quality is good.

Green Onions:

Iced: This market has leveled off with steady crossings last week. The crossings should remain at current levels with good supplies.

Iceless: This market has leveled off and should remain steady. Contracts and pre-commitments are holding the market firm.

JICAMA: Normal prices and quality is good.

Kale (Green): Demand is steady and quality is average. We are seeing some mildew.

Mache: Availability is adequate.

Napa: Supplies are light but much better than last week. We will continue to see improvement.

Parsley (Curly, Italian): **ESCALATED** we are seeing prices remain VERY high and supplies being short.

Radishes: Quality is good and supply is slowing down.

Red Cabbage: Quality and sizing have been great, with good color. Overall, the market is strong.

Snow and Sugar Snap Peas: Snow and sugar snap peas are in high demand with good quality.

Spinach (Bunched): Supply is good, quality has improved.

Spinach (Baby): Baby and clipped spinach supplies are good. Quality is good, with good prices. There are some reports of mildew.

Spring Mix: There is plenty of product with good quality.

Onions

Pricing has started to drop on yellow and red onions out of all growing regions. The Imperial Valley growing area in California has continued to increase volume this week and more growers will continue to start next week. Onions remain in Idaho, Washington, and Texas. Texas continues to yield a small size profile heavy to mediums and small jumbos due to diseased fields. White onions have become more available which we anticipate will decrease prices as well.

Potatoes

The demand on larger counts, 40's thru 70's continue to be very good, very tight on those sizes. The demand on the 80's thru 100's is fair. We have seen prices increase on the larger counts and the remaining cartons prices are steady. There are deals to be made on the smaller counts, not large price reductions but some operations have the smaller sizes to move. The growers are continuing to plant, however the weather is slowing this down and the forecast looks like continued rain for the next few days, possible snow, but light. The government indicated that they may have underestimated the yields on last year's crop that we are currently shipping and it appears we have an ample supply of fresh potatoes left to move. No major transportation issues at this time.

TOMATOES

East:

- **Rounds** – Supplies in the east are good as the transition from Southern Florida to the Ruskin area continues. We do not foresee any supply interruptions, however, sizing has shifted again towards larger fruit as the new plants are being harvested. Pricing will remain steady this week and we do not expect any major changes. Stronger fruit comes with newer stronger plants so we are also seeing very good quality.
- **Roma** – Harvest forecasts are mostly unchanged and quality is good. Pricing is mostly unchanged.
- **Grapes** – Supplies are improving daily, prices have fallen and quality is excellent.

- **Cherries** – Demand is up as quality product is difficult to find in the west. FOB prices are mostly unchanged, quality is outstanding.

West/Mexico:

- **Rounds** – Vine-ripe production is lighter this week through Nogales as the season winds down. McAllen and Otay will continue to see improvement in volume. FOB prices are unchanged and quality will remain very good.
- **Romas** – Supplies and quality are good through McAllen and Otay and are expected to remain unchanged over the next several weeks. Nogales is starting to see a decline in quality as production slows down in Sinaloa. We will continue to see aggressive pricing from the growers this week.
- **Grapes** – Crossings are improving however quality is very inconsistent depending on the growing region. Prices are down across all three points this week.
- **Cherries** – Supplies are good and quality is improving and gradually driving demand for east coast product down. We do not anticipate any major change this week, however should begin to see a change in pricing next week.

APPLES, PEARS, & TREEFRUIT

Apples: Demand and movement is steady on the larger sized fruit across all grades. Golds and Grannys remain extremely short with the industry still seeing better yields on 100s and smaller for all other varieties. We expect to see this continue through the rest of the season. Offshore deal remains steady; Galas are plentiful and the Granny volume is ramping up.

Pears: Bosc and Anjou are readily available domestically out of Washington. We expect to see California begin in July. Offshore Bosc and Packham supplies are steady.

Stone Fruit: Offshore

Peaches: About done for the season

Nectarines: About done for the season

Plums: About done for the season

Stone Fruit: Domestic

Nectarines: Reports of a few cleanup picks already this season

Plums and Apricots on the horizon