

January 4, 2018

### Overview

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Lettuce, romaine and leaf items are steady, but there are quality issues. Lemons and oranges are in a very **EXTREME** market. Cilantro, broccoli, tender leaf items (baby spinach, clipped spinach, arugula and baby kale blends), green onions, and cauliflower are **ESCALATED** and we are seeing shorter supplies. Spinach may hit a gap in supply, while berries are steady and squashes are readily available. Basil and thyme are also limited this week.

### Market Alert

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- Arugula and Wild Arugula – **ESCALATED**
- Asparagus – **ESCALATED**
- Avocados – **ESCALATED**
- Baby Kale Blends – **ESCALATED**
- Broccoli – **ESCALATED**
- Cauliflower – **ESCALATED**
- Cilantro – **ESCALATED**
- Green Onions – **ESCALATED**
- Lemons – **EXTREME**
- Mushrooms – **ESCALATED**
- Oranges (Small sizes) – **EXTREME**
- Rapini – **ESCALATED**
- Snow and Sugar Snap Peas – **ESCALATED**
- Baby Spinach – **ESCALATED**
- Tomatoes- (Cherries, Grapes, Romas, Rounds) – **ESCALATED**

### Watch List

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**SPINACH:** We are seeing prices rise and a shortage in supply that may turn into a gap in supply due to weather-related issues.

**FRESH HERBS:** For **mint and thyme**, A slow recovery from Christmas demand could cause some supply interruptions this week. In addition to mint and thyme, basil production has been down; however, it is ramping back up out of Southern Baja.

**SPRING MIX AND VALU-ADDED LETTUCE:** We could see lighter supplies and higher prices over the next few weeks due to weather impacting supply and quality.

### Market Alert Alternatives

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As tomatoes continue to struggle in the market, we are looking to steady items that are equally delicious and can be used as substitutes for certain dishes. Try making a sandwich or classic burger Hawaiian style with a pineapple instead of tomatoes. Oranges are in a similar position, however, with the access of winter citrus such as blood oranges, similar alternatives are certainly available. Broccoli and cauliflower are also both **ESCALATED**, but green beans and Brussel sprouts can bring the same green, flavorful effect to many veg-heavy dishes.

## **Good Buys**

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### **Green, Yellow, and Red Bell Peppers!**

Bringing color back into the cold tundra doesn't stop in the citrus section! Red, yellow, and green bell peppers are dazzling the market, showing outstanding supply and quality coming out of the west, making them the perfect good buy for this first week of the New Year.

Plus, they are the perfect veg to help you stick to healthier-eating resolutions! Bell peppers are low in calories, high in Vitamin C (especially the ripest of the group: red bell), and contains solid levels of sulfur content, allowing them to play a protective role in certain types of cancers.

Add some hearty summer flavors to your winter palette this week with some delicious ratatouille. See the vegetable-filled recipe below!

### **[Ma Belle Mere's Ratatouille](#)**

#### *Ingredients*

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
- 1 medium white onion, chopped (1 1/2 cups)
- 2 medium red bell peppers, ribs and seeds removed, cut into 3/4-inch pieces (3 cups)
- 5 cloves garlic, minced (3 tablespoons)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 medium eggplants, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (8 cups)
- 2 cups dry white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc
- 4 medium tomatoes, quartered
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 4 medium zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch rounds (6 cups)
- 2 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 3 large fresh basil leaves, plus more for serving
- 4 fresh bay leaves

#### *Directions*

1. Heat 1/4 cup oil in a large, heavy pot over medium until shimmering. Add onion and peppers; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and beginning to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Add garlic and tomato paste; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add eggplants and remaining 1/4 cup oil and cook, stirring occasionally, until eggplants are softened and beginning to brown, 8 minutes.
2. Add wine and tomatoes; season generously with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of pan. Add zucchini and herbs, reduce heat to medium, and cook, uncovered, until vegetables are tender and eggplants are beginning to break down, about 45 minutes. Adjust seasoning. Before serving, drizzle with oil and scatter with more basil leaves.

## Weather

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**We are seeing the potential for crop damage in Florida due to the cold weather impacting the southeast of the nation. We will keep you informed of any updates from our grower/partners.**

### Severe Weather Alerts - Plant City, FL



#### Freeze Warning

Freeze Warning in effect from Thursday, 3:00 AM EST until Thursday, 9:00 AM EST. Source: U.S. National Weather Service



**SOUTHEAST:** The forecast calls for severe cold overnight temps tonight and Friday. A gradual warming trend should return Saturday.

Thu 01/04	Fri 01/05	Sat 01/06	Sun 01/07	Mon 01/08	Tue 01/09	Wed 01/10
59°   34°	60°   38°	65°   44°	73°   54°	79°   59°	76°   52°	74°   56°
Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Clear

**HERMOSILLO:** Mild temperatures will be in the forecast with plenty of sunshine through next week.

Thu 01/04	Fri 01/05	Sat 01/06	Sun 01/07	Mon 01/08	Tue 01/09	Wed 01/10
82°   54°	86°   54°	87°   54°	85°   55°	87°   56°	87°   56°	80°   51°
Partly Cloudy	Clear	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

**CULIACAN:** Normal weather patterns are expected this week with more seasonal temperatures.

Thu 01/04	Fri 01/05	Sat 01/06	Sun 01/07	Mon 01/08	Tue 01/09	Wed 01/10
86°   60°	88°   58°	91°   54°	89°   55°	90°   56°	93°   55°	90°   54°
Clear	Clear	Clear	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

**YUMA:** The forecast calls for a mix of clouds and sunshine through next week with highs in the 70's and low 50's to upper 40's at night.

Thu 01/04	Fri 01/05	Sat 01/06	Sun 01/07	Mon 01/08	Tue 01/09	Wed 01/10
79°   51°	79°   52°	79°   54°	79°   54°	77°   55°	77°   52°	71°   50°
Clear	Clear	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Clear	Clear

## Transportation – EXTREME

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Transportation is extremely tight and rates continue to increase as rollout day for e-log approaches when truck drivers will electronically log their hours of service. We are seeing an extreme shortage of drivers in the west due to federal regulations regarding non-citizen drivers not being permitted to drive loads that originate in the United States. We are seeing rate increase requests across the region.

## Fruits & Vegetables

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**Avocados: ESCALATED** We are seeing a shift in the size breakout of the daily harvest with smaller sizes being shorter than expected. We anticipate a firmer market on 60's and smaller over the next several weeks. There is also the potential for a flush of #2 fruit on the horizon just in time for Super Bowl demand.

**Bananas:** Demand remains firm and quality is good, but we are seeing short supplies across the country and expect a shortage to continue through 2018 due to virus impacts.

**Grapes:** Quality is good on the storage Reds. Scarlet Royals and Crimson are the varieties that are available and remaining in California. Offshore varieties are available out of Peru and Sagraone, Falmes, Crimsons and Globes are available through Philadelphia and New York. FOB port prices are \$28.00 to \$34.00.

**Kiwi:** California crops are now in full swing with ample supply available and showing excellent quality. This new crop will extend all the way through to February.

## **Berries**

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**Blueberries:** Availability is lighter due to cooler weather and limited labor in Mexico; FOB prices are high and quality is fair.

**Blackberries:** Volume is expected to begin decreasing, quality is in question due to weather and potential for rain is on the horizon for this coming week. FOB prices are also high.

**Raspberries:** Volume is steady, quality is good, and prices are high.

**Strawberry:** The market is getting very active, with much higher prices. Quality is good. We could see potential supply shortages out of Florida due to the cold weather this week impacting the east coast.

## **California / Arizona Citrus**

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The California navel market is in a demand exceeds supply situation on small fruit. The size structure for 113S and 138S navels are expected to be down by 30-50% during the first quarter of 2018, with fruit peaking 72/56S. Prices will remain higher than usual. The Ventura County fires have had an impact on that growing region, but it is too early to assess all the damage.

**Navels/Valencia's:** **EXTREME** California orange supplies during Quarter 1 will carry a larger than normal size structure, making 88S/113S/138S increasingly difficult. Shippers are expecting a 30% reduction in 113S and a 50% reduction in 138S versus this time last year. Expect higher prices overall with fruit expected to peak 72/56.

**Lemons:** **EXTREME** All crops came up very short, we are in a demand exceeds supply on all small fruit and expect to see this issue for the next eight weeks. We suggest moving to bigger fruit.

**Limes:** Limes are available.

**Grapefruit:** Texas grapefruit is available. Florida Star Ruby/Red is available. California Star Ruby are available.

## **Specialties:**

- Fairchild Tangerines, Orlando Tangelos, and Minneola Tangelos have started.
- Domestic blood oranges and Cara Caras are now available.
- New Zealand Meyers are available.
- Sunburst Tangerines are available out of FL.
- Halos and Cuties have started.
- Pummelos are available.

- Mexican Tangerines are available out of TX.

## **California Lettuce**

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**Butter:** Prices are stable. Quality is good.

**Green and Red Leaf:** Quality is good. Prices are good.

**Iceberg Lettuce:** Supplies continue to drop due to the cold weather and ice. Quality is steady, but the cold could create gaps in supplies which will cause the prices to rise.

**Romaine:** Supplies will be light for the next couple of weeks due to ice in the fields. Quality is average. We are still seeing heavy rib and some twisting. Pricing is a wide range due to the quality issues.

**Romaine Hearts:** Supplies will be normal for the next few weeks. Quality has improved, as most issues with quality can be peeled off. Pricing is a wide range due to quality.

## **Eastern and Western Vegetables**

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***Recent cold weather has the potential to severely damage crops in Florida. We will keep you informed of any updates as soon as possible!***

**Green Bell Pepper:** Supplies are very limited out of the east. We do not expect to see improvement in this market over the next couple of weeks. Out of the west, supplies and quality are very good. Market is stable through Nogales.

**Red Bell Pepper:** Supplies are now shipping primarily through Nogales and the FOB prices are unchanged this week. Quality is outstanding.

**Yellow Pepper:** Supplies are unchanged loading through Nogales. FOB prices are mostly unchanged as well.

**Mini Sweet Pepper:** Supplies are tighter as heat has affected supplies in the west and crops in the east have been damaged by Irma. Markets are expected to remain firm for the remainder of the month.

**Eggplant:** Supplies are lighter this week out of Florida, and Nogales is mostly unchanged. Markets are mostly unchanged this week.

**English Cucumber:** There are excellent supplies crossing through Nogales and McAllen.

**Cucumbers:** Good offshore supplies are available out of Florida; domestic supplies are limited. Markets have ticked up slightly. Supplies are unchanged and are plentiful out of Nogales and McAllen. Pole cucumber quality out of the shade houses in Mexico are gorgeous, showing dark green fruit with very little blemish or defect.

**Green Beans:** Supplies will remain firm loading through McAllen, Nogales and Florida. Quality is an ongoing issue in all regions. We anticipate a firm market and will advise week-to-week.

**Zucchini and Yellow Squash:** Supplies have improved as volume of offshore product increases. We are still seeing some quality issues with Florida product. Import volume out of Mexico has increased due to warm weather. FOB prices are down.

**Herbs**

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**MINT: WATCHLIST** In addition to the heavy demand for Christmas, the cooler weather at night has caused supply to slow down. We will have mint, but the stems will be shorter (it is harder to make the bunches, and the bunches will be smaller and with less weight). We expect light supplies over the next four weeks.

**BASIL: WATCHLIST** The challenge for the past several weeks has been reduced supplies due to wind damage. The plants are starting to come back and supplies should pick back up late next week; however, we continue to see USDA holding product in the west for inspections. As a result, delayed crossings of product have the potential to cause supply GAPS in the west. Prices are starting to climb as the growers try to recover from the reduced harvest the past three weeks. Look for price increases as we start off the new year.

**DILL:** The cooler weather has caused this herb to slow in growth as well. Expect the length to be shorter for the next several weeks.

**THYME: WATCHLIST** Due to the heavy demand during the Christmas Break, thyme supplies are lighter this week, we do not anticipate inventories to improve until late next week.

**LEMON THYME, OPAL BASIL, SAVORY, MARJORAM:** All four of these herbs are very limited in supply for the next three weeks due to weather issues.

All other herbs are steady.

HERB	SUPPLIES	QUALITY	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
Arugula	Light	Fair	USA
Basil	Limited	Good	USA/MEXICO
Opal Basil	Limited	Good	USA/MEXICO
Thai Basil	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Bay Leaves	Good	Good	COLUMBIA
Chervil	Good	Good	USA
Chives	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Cilantro	Light	Good	USA
Dill	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Episode	Good	Good	MEXICO
Lemongrass	Good	Good	USA
Marjoram	Limited	Good	USA
Mint	Limited	Good	USA

Oregano	Good	Good	USA
Italian Parsley	Good	Good	USA
<b>Rosemary</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Sage</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>USA/MEXICO</b>
<b>Savory</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>USA</b>
Sorrel	Good	Good	USA
Tarragon	Good	Good	MEXICO
<b>Thyme</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>USA</b>
Lemon Thyme	Good	Good	USA
<b>Lavender</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>USA</b>
Lime Leaves	Good	Good	USA
Hora Santa	Good	Good	USA

## **Melons**

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**Cantaloupe:** Offshore supplies will remain lighter over the next few weeks as a result of late plantings in the fall. Import quality has been strong with firm fruit and good internal quality as brix levels have been mostly in the 11-15% range. Good supplies are available on 9-12ct with supply on 15's limited.

**Honeydew:** There are still some dews hanging around in Nogales; however, quality is marginal. Offshore availability remains steady with 5-6's being the peak size, smaller fruit (8/9s) will remain very limited. Brix levels are 11-16% range. Markets are firm.

**Watermelon:** This item remains very active and continues to be short on all sizes crossing through Nogales and McAllen. We expect the market will remain active for the next three to four weeks.

## **Mixed Vegetables**

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**Artichokes:** Steady market with higher prices. Quality is good.

**Arugula:** **ESCALATED** Supplies are limited and we are seeing quality issues due to cooler weather.

**Asparagus:** **ESCALATED** Supplies are short and prices are higher, but quality is good.

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

**Broccoli / Broccoli Florets:** **ESCALATED** Supplies are short and prices are high, but quality is good.

**Brussels Sprouts:** Markets are improving as additional inventory becomes available. Quality is good.

**Carrots:** Due to the heat and rain, we are seeing some quality issues and a shortage on jumbo supplies as well as tables and cellos. This market is improving, but prices are still higher.

**Cauliflower: ESCALATED** Though quality is looking good, prices on cauliflower are high. Cool nights have slowed the growth, and supplies industry wide are very short.

**Celery:** Market is steady. We are seeing good quality and steady supplies.

**Corn:** Sweet corn supplies are very good out of South Florida; however, we could see this firm up once the assessments come in from the freeze.

**Cilantro: ESCALATED** Supplies are limited and we are seeing quality issues due to cooler weather.

**Fennel:** Supplies for the week will be good and quality is good.

**Garlic: EXTREME** We have now fully transitioned from common storage garlic to cold storage product. Fortunately to date, our recoveries are faring relatively fine through the cracking/peeling process. Concerning the future/2018 crop, we are 85% completed with our planting season. Provided the weather (and that Mother Nature cooperates), we should finish planting within the next two weeks. In the coming months, we'll hope for cold enough weather and decent rainfall (similar to last year) to help facilitate the growth of the bulbs.

**Ginger:** Chinese ginger supplies are steady. Quality is good.

**Green Cabbage:** Supply is good on both coasts, quality is good.

**Green Onions ESCALATED Iced:** We are seeing a shortage in supply due to demand of the holiday pull. Expect higher prices.

**JICAMA:** Prices are firming up and inventories are lighter. We are seeing some quality and shelf life issues in storage product.

**Kale (Green):** Quality is average and supplies are fair.

**Baby Kale Blends: ESCALATED** Baby kale blends are extremely tight right now, with increased prices and major quality issues in the fields. This setback is forecasted to last for at least another week or two.

**Mache:** Availability is adequate.

**Mushrooms: ESCALATED** Mushroom growers have suffered damage in the South and Southeast, as well as Puerto Rico. Hurricane Harvey and Irma have resulted in a tightening market, and the American Mushroom Institute said it expects supply to be affected for several months.

**Napa:** Supplies are steady and quality is good.

**Parsley (Curly, Italian):** Quality and supplies are fair.

**Rapini: ESCALATED** Supplies are very limited and prices are very high. Quality is average.



**Radishes:** Quality is good and supply is slowing down. Expect to see stronger markets through the summer.

**Red Cabbage:** Quality and sizing have been great with good color. Market is stable.

**Snow and Sugar Snap Peas: ESCALATED** Snow and sugar snap peas are in high demand and markets are extremely tight.

**Spinach (Bunched): WATCHLIST** Supplies are limited and prices are rising, so we may see a gap in supply. The colder nights and warm days have prohibited the growth of this item.

**Spinach (Baby): ESCALATED** Baby and clipped spinach supplies are low. We are seeing average to poor quality.

**Spring Mix: WATCHLIST** Supplies are fair and quality is fair.

### **Onions:**

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All indications are showing that supplies are significantly shorter than previous seasons. It is likely that we will see pricing remain elevated as demand exceeds supplies. Sizing is peaking mostly on mediums and jumbos with fewer big onions, but size overall has become better. Transportation in this region has been the largest factor keeping pricing where it is as trucks have been extremely tight. This is forcing heavier movement from regions outside of the northwest which has forced that area to keep pricing where it is at.

### **Potatoes:**

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Demand in the state is fair and prices are steady. This week is a short production week for all operations and next week will be similar. If tradition holds true, there should be a very good demand for the first two/three weeks of January. Prices should also remain steady. The transportation problems will continue to have adverse effects in this market.

### **TOMATOES - EAST**

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***Cold weather has the potential to severely damage crops in Florida. We will keep you informed of any updates as soon as possible!***

- **Rounds: ESCALATED** We are finally seeing improving numbers out of Immokallee and the worst is finally behind us. We are still seeing a very firm market; however, this is expected to improve daily barring with no major freeze damage. Quality is good and FOB prices are down this week.
- **Romas: ESCALATED** We are still seeing production numbers ramp up, but not as fast as expected. We have seen prices drop thanks to volume increasing out of Mexico. FOB prices are mostly unchanged this week.
- **Grapes: ESCALATED** Supplies are improving, yet we are still seeing inventory shortfalls resulting in a very firm market. FOB prices are up slightly this week.
- **Cherries: ESCALATED** For product that is available, quality is good.

### **TOMATOES - WEST AND MEXICO**

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- **Rounds: ESCALATED** Vine-ripe production will begin to increase as production ramps up out of Culiacan and cross through Nogales and McAllen. We expect improvements to take approximately two weeks. Small sizes are tight due to crown picks. FOB prices are slightly down this week.
- **Romas: ESCALATED** We are seeing volume ramp back up with production out of Culiacan crossing through Nogales and McAllen. FOB prices are down slightly this week as production is slowly ramping up.

- **Grapes: ESCALATED** Crossings have improved slightly, but we continue to see all-time lows this week due to bloom drop and supply gaps in all Baja districts. Grape tomato FOB prices are down slightly this week.
- **Cherries: ESCALATED** We are seeing a demand exceeds supply condition this week and we expect no relief until another two weeks from now.

## **APPLES & PEARS**

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**Apples: PROMOTIONAL VOLUME AVAILABLE ON FOOD SERVICE/SMALL SIZED FRUIT** New crop now available we are seeing the pressure on the market decrease and shortages diminish. Excellent quality available on all varieties; however, we are seeing less production of Golden Delicious as the trees are being pulled and replaced with more favorable varieties. Please make note that volume orders on food service grade apples must be pre-booked to ensure they are not packed with PLU stickers.

**Pears:** Still good availability on Golds out of California while we see good supply available on Bartlett and D'Anjou out of the Pacific Northwest.