



**Del Bene  
PRODUCE**

# Market Update

For the week ending December 3, 2016

## **SUGGESTED BUYS:**

Beans, English cucumbers, Leafy product, Watermelons, Raspberries and Brussels sprouts

## **TIGHT AND EXPENSIVE:**

Strawberries

## **NEW ON MARKET:**

Sweet Cherries, Fresh Yuzu Fruit, Sun chokes, Quince, Persimmons and Dragon fruit

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## **AVOCADOS: MARKET STEADY**

Shipments from Mexico slowed this past weeks and availability was a bit lower than previous weeks, but volumes are expected to pick up next week and remain steady through the holidays. Following two months of extreme conditions and markets, the avocado market should be stable through the New Year. Some residual effects remain from growers ramping up production – namely, there are still some delays on ripened fruit and some ripe fruit is still a bit on the green side.

## **BERRIES: Blackberries, Blueberries MARKET HIGHER; Raspberry MARKET STEADY Strawberry MARKET LOWER but still HIGH** *Strawberries –*

Strawberry supplies have decreased and will remain limited next week. Growers in northern California (Salinas and Watsonville) have all but finished their seasons. Production is still limited in Santa Maria; rainy weather continues to damage most fruit and supplies will be limited until plants are cleaned up for a fresh harvest. In Oxnard, the early crop has passed peak production but they should begin packing the late crop sometime in the next two weeks. In Mexico, production is increasing, and along with this, the number of berries headed to the United States is also growing. Supplies will be limited for the foreseeable future, definitely throughout the holiday season. In addition to limited supplies, quality will be an issue. Cooler temperatures and rainy weather in both Mexico and California are affecting berry quality. Specifically, the cooler weather increases the time for fruit to fully ripen and leads to white shoulders. All in all, we recommend you keep the tightest inventory possible to maintain quality.

*Blackberries –* The up and down price movement for the blackberry market is a result of rain hitting central Mexico over the past week, which delays shipments and slows production. Other than that, production has been steady coming across the border. California on the other hand is winding down for the season and supplies are limited. Sizing remains on the larger side and overall quality has been good.

*Blueberries –* Both supply and quality remain very good for the blueberry market with product coming from South America and Mexico. Prices are steady this week, but we may see a price increase over the next couple of weeks as the season in Argentina comes to a close. As of now, there are no shortages or supply gaps expected as Chile will be increasing production at the same time Argentina falls off. In addition, the number of air shipments will decline and increased orders placed for delivery via ship will take place. The ships usually take three weeks to bring product from South America into the United States. Pricing should then come back down in December.

*Raspberries –* This may be an excellent item to use as a substitution for strawberries as increased supplies are coming out of the southern California growing area as well as Central Mexico. Prices are as low as you'll see all year for raspberries. Quality remains very good with limited reports of wet berries. Production is expected to peak over the next few weeks making this a great time to incorporate raspberries into your menu.

## **LETTUCE: MARKET DOWN SLIGHTLY**

*Iceberg –* The market is in a supply exceeds demand situation, but quality issues are the story here. High temperatures in the growing areas of Brawley, Coachella, and Yuma are causing minor defects such as misshaped heads, discoloration, and inconsistent weights (averaging thirty-eight to forty-four pounds). In addition to the temperatures, winds have been as high as forty-five miles per hour. We may see prices increase slightly as Santa Maria and Huron wind down, but overall the market is steady.

*Romaine –* Although there are several different areas producing right now, we continue to see quality issues on romaine, romaine hearts, and leaf lettuce out of northern and southern California as well as Yuma, Arizona. Mildew, brown spotting, twisting, seeder (long core), and tip burn are among the problems being reported. Romaine case weights have been inconsistent, ranging from twenty-seven to thirty-four pounds. We will continue to make every effort to supply good quality product for you as we get through these issues.

## **MELONS: MARKETS LOWER**

*Cantaloupe –* The larger (nine-count) cantaloupe are becoming more readily available as additional offshore product hits the market. This is also helping to drop the price down a little bit. The domestic desert crop has been going for a month and a half now, while marginal supplies are crossing from Mexico. Offshore melons have arrived in Florida and has helped the supply line. Quality on melons from each growing area is excellent.

*Honeydew –* More of the same for the honeydew market. Product is coming from the same growing areas as cantaloupe with no disruption in supply. Quality has been excellent from each area and honeydew will continue to be a good buy.

## **STONE FRUIT:**

We will not be stocking any apricots, peaches, plums, or nectarines until the Chilean crop starts up some time in December or January. The California crop has ended and anything that is available is poor quality.

## **TOMATOES: MARKETS STEADY**

The Florida growing areas of Ruskin, Palmetto, and Naples continue to see higher volumes and good quality product. Supplies in Florida and out west are both fairly steady. 5x6, roma, grape, and cherry tomatoes are all very reasonably priced with good quality. Other varieties available: compari, kumato, mixed cherry, heirloom, hot house (red or green), and yellow grape.

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