

TESTA PRODUCE Market Report

Outlook for the Week of
May 30, 2011



Market Report

Governor Quinn's new budget calls for cuts in community based disability services. These are the people who take care of kids and adults with disabilities, and the state wants to cut their budget while increasing money by millions of dollars for new state institutions. It cost the taxpayers of Illinois about \$192,000 a year to keep someone in a state institution but only \$50,000 a year for a community based person. The benefits of a community atmosphere are far superior to an institution. Illinois will lose federal matching money of about \$31 million by cutting the community disability services. How smart is that? And everyone wants to know how Illinois got so deep in trouble- you don't have to look too far to figure out why. The disabled are not the ones you cut money from, you cut from all the unnecessary and wasteful programs that politicians love to create but never figure out how to pay for without raising our taxes. Governor Quinn needs to hear how bad an idea it is to cut community disables services so send him a note if you can.

This week is short because of the holiday but we do have a few good items that are going out at special prices. Organic Crenshaws and Organic Yellow Watermelons are the first two. We also will have Organic Honeydews and Organic English Peas. If you bought English Peas last week, you got Organic ones. The supplies are limited so when they're gone, they're gone, but they are definitely a good deal so order early. You can buy Yellow Watermelon by the piece if you want. All the summer fruits are starting. Peaches, Nectarines, Apricots, Apriums, Cherries, Figs- Green and Black, White Peaches, Oro Blanco, Meyer Lemons, Mandarin, Gold Raspberries – that should be enough to get you started. Did I mention Yellow Watermelon? New crop Cantaloupes from California start next week but they are a lot higher priced. They still have some very good off shore fruit left, mostly big stuff but flavor is awesome.

Strawberries are having some issues because of weather- rain and cold temperatures have caused some quality issues but growers are hoping to see better weather next week. Blues are terrific and Blackberries are also excellent. Raspberries are cheap and all three together are a great fruit plate- add chocolate or caramel and you're done- who wouldn't want that. Now if you're really adventurous, you take the Berries and the chocolate or caramel and you surprise your wife or husband and have some fun. Now for all you that have your mind in the gutter (like me) you need to prepare for this adventure, and my suggestion is first some type of nice sheets or better yet, a Jacuzzi or shower – the details of who does what is your problem. I can only bring up the ideas and provide the Berries- but with chocolate and caramel, how could you have a bad time. Back to the basics- Grapefruit is still around and excellent, Tangerines and Clementines are done. We do have TDE's which are like Tangerines on steroids- outstanding flavor but look very different. If you try one, you will be hooked. Grapes are getting better, but slowly; some come in a little bitter, but others are super- it's the way the first of the season goes, but it will get better quickly. Avocados are still pricey but quality is excellent. Navel Oranges are done and Valencias are starting from Florida and California. Lychee Nuts are starting but only around for 30 days. If you need a different Banana, try Red or Baby, they make a nice change.

The Lettuce market did a crash and burn last week and so did Romaine, which is good news for all you Caesar salad lovers. If you don't like salad, too bad. Artichokes are still a problem child. All of my growers and suppliers have told me that this year is the worst Artichoke season they have seen in years and I would agree. Most of the good Artichokes had frost damage which usually comes out when you cook them, but when receiving people see the frost- which is brown-

Market Report, Cont'd...

they send them back because they think they're no good, and that happens all the time. Most chefs know it comes out when cooked but they don't always receive the product, so it's an issue. The problem I see is Globe Artichoke – although they look nice, they don't have any heart. And if you're an Artichoke lover like me, no heart = no good. By the way, my mom made the best Artichokes in the world and I have not found a better one yet. Even in the top Italian restaurants I have eaten at, sorry, nobody does it better than mom!

We have had some pretty cool Baby Purple Artichokes but they have been limited. Local Asparagus is going strong and quality is outstanding. I have had the question asked 'why can't I set the price cheaper than the off shore product.' You must remember, large commercial growers produce hundreds of thousands of boxes of product and they are set up to produce that type of volume. Most local growers are not large scale farming people, they are limited in the size, therefore they can have product that they need to get a higher price for. So that is why sometimes the price is higher for local than off-shore product and California product as well. The other problem you have is local farmers are now becoming rock stars because everyone thinks its better to buy local, so they are asking for and getting higher prices on product because they know the public is willing to pay more. Be careful what you wish for, it can come back to bite you at times. Most of my friends who are local understand foodservice verses farmers markets so they make sure I have product at a good and fair prices for my customers and when they go to farmers markets, they charge more, and that's fine with me because I don't shop farmers markets.

Cucs are down, Celery is down, Leeks are still high, Eggplant has gone back up but just a little. Escarole and Endive are steady, Brussel Sprouts are still very high and supplies are tight. Fava Beans and English Peas are plentiful. The Pepper market got a lot stronger this week, mostly on Green Peppers. Growers are having issues filling orders but I don't think that its going to last, so don't worry- they won't be able to hold high prices for longer than a week. Red Peppers came down also but Yellow Peppers are still high.

The Yellow Squash market is much higher but Zucchini is still very reasonable. Cabbage is steady for both Red and Green. All the Root Veggies are steady- Parsnips, Beets, and Turnips to name a few. Spring Garlic is still going but the season is winding down a little so it can end very quickly, but for now we still are able to get them so keep it going. Ramps are another one that stops very quickly- We have been able to keep going with them but not much lon-

ger. Corn is steady and Beans are much higher.

The Tomato market it getting better slowly but prices are not going down yet. Most growers are still feeling the effects of rain and cold weather early in the season therefore there are higher prices now but some relief is headed our way because production is looking better, I think by the end of next week we should see a change towards the down side.

Starting soon we will be having great deals on product available through our Facebook and Twitter pages. Make sure to follow us on both of the pages so you don't miss out on the great upcoming products we have available. Have a Great Memorial Day and don't forget Yellow Watermelon.

Sale Items

Pineapple, Case 8ct	\$14.95	Testa Item #31603
Honeydew, Organic Case	\$12.95	Testa Item #65262
Crenshaw Melons, Case	\$14.00	Testa Item #25351
Crenshaw Melons, Organic Case	\$14.00	Testa Item #65157
Cucumbers, Basket Case 24ct	\$9.50	Testa Item #06655
Romaine, Case 24ct	\$16.00	Testa Item #36900

Quantities are Limited.

Available While Supplies Last!

BE SURE TO USE THESE ITEM NUMBERS!

Produce Quiz

I am a perennial found throughout southern India. I became a popular in Greek and Roman cooking after Alexander the Great's soldiers introduced me to Europe. Today I remain popular in Eastern and Arab countries but receive little attention in the west with the exception of Scandinavia, who, strangely enough, has taken quite a liking to me. I am elite in my class, only being out priced by the likes of vanilla and saffron. Beginning as a thumb thick creeping root stock I grow up to 8 feet tall producing a three-celled pod containing up to 18 seeds. Long dark-green leaves with lanceolate tops and silky smooth bottoms protect my pod. My yellow or bluish flowers can be found near the ground. My Malabar variety is tops, but often substituted with the lesser qualities of the Cambodian or Sri Lankan varieties, respectively. Although I can be found in ground or seed form, it is best to buy me by the pod to insure I am not mixed with imposters. My pod color will vary by region due to the style of processing. I'm sun-dried and green in India, oven-dried and brown in Asia and Europe, and bleached white in the United States. Used as a substitute for gluten, I can be found in breads and cereals. I also add flavor to egg-nogs, wines and liqueurs, fruit compotes, fruitcakes and marinades. I am a prime ingredient in curry and garam masala. A few of my seeds steeped in boiling water makes a soothing tea that will aid digestion. Sometimes you will find me used as a replacement for ginger or cinnamon. I am a good source of potassium and also provide calcium, iron and zinc.

Last Quiz Answer: Tamarillo

