

TESTA PRODUCE Market Report

Outlook for the Week of
**September 26,
2011**



Market Report

We are seeing the weather start to change. In no time the winter season will be upon us, but not to worry, we will still have plenty of cool stuff for the winter. In October you can get Baby Kiwi, Buddha Hands, Pummelos, Oroblancos, Heirloom Carrots, Feijoas, Yali Pears, Crab Apples, Heirloom Apples (more about these in a minute), Pomegranate, Quince, Rambutan, Persimmons, and Raisins on the Vine.

It has been a very challenging year in produce- we have seen huge swings on different commodities this year. Some weather related, but others because everyone wanted locally grown product. Farmers are now rock stars so all your prices went up, but what you must also understand is because you wanted local, getting product from farms that practice good agricultural practices is very important. You cannot short change food safety and unfortunately, not every local farm can be tested. Size of a farm doesn't mean anything when it comes to food safety. Any item, no matter how clean you think your product is, can get infected. You have to use good judgment when you deal with farmers and you have to make sure you are doing all you can do to get safe, clean, and good tasting product. If only it were that easy. I have been dealing with certain farmers for years and the comments I hear from them are interesting to say the least; but what they all want as a group is a fair price for their labor and to be paid on time. Funny, I want the same thing- it must be a produce thing because I never hear any other industry wanting those things.

Asparagus is steady, price is down a little. Beans shot back up in price because of weather, lots of issues with

heat and rain. Wax Beans are just fair quality so we will play it day-by-day. Corn is good and supply is steady. Cucs are higher but Basket Cucs are about the same. Green Onions took off, prices are up \$5-8 per box, Mostly due to Holidays. Carrots are down. Cauliflower is steady. Celery is steady, you will see more Organic Celery this week and it's the same price as conventional. Broccoli is steady, Green Peppers are steady, but Red Peppers are higher and Yellow Peppers are the same. Box Potatoes are starting to fall, B Reds are steady, Utility are still high but not for long; pressure is coming from local product but quality is an issue with Local Potatoes.

If you are a Hard Squash lover, you are in good shape because your season is about to start. Acorn, Butternut, Spaghetti, Delicata, Hubbard, Golden Acorn, Red Kuri, and a few more- I can't remember their names but you get the idea. All of these are available in the next 3-4 weeks and will run for a while, so don't be afraid to ask for something different. It's always great when chefs go outside their comfort level to try something different- you never know, you could create the next trendy idea. (Not)

Now for a few problem children: Zucchini and Yellow Squash. These two have been very bad boys lately and mostly because of supply issues- which hopefully will get solved this week. But that didn't stop prices from going stupid and really fast. We paid over \$38 for Yellow Squash last week and could only get 1 pallet when we needed 5. But that's what can happen when Mother Nature gets involved. Supplies of both Yellow Squash and Zucchini became super tight and no one had enough to cover the demand. This week price will stay high till late in the week and then they will fall, but not a lot. Mostly they will go to the high twenties but we will wait and see

Market Report, Cont'd...

how it all plays out.

Lettuce is active but not so active that prices are going crazy, it's just that time of year. Romaine is higher but Romaine Hearts are stable. Mesclun is having some issues with the Red Leaves again. They are always the first to break down in any Mesclun, so we try and watch that closely; but if you see a continuing problem we want to know about so we can tell the shipper. Don't wait until you're pissed off to tell us; at the first sign of a problem, call me or my sales team. I never want you to get a bad product but I also know we can't check every box, every time. I would like to, but then I won't be in business because the labor would kill me.

Strawberries are running hot and cold; some fields are fine and others not so good. They look great one day and the next they are ready for the freezer.

Don't forget when Berries get a little crazy, you can always freeze them and use them in smoothies if they are just bruised, it's a good way to get a good use out of them.

Blackberries are still tight. Blues are switching back to 6oz and 4.4oz. Soon South American fruit will hit but it's only a matter of time before quality gets too crappy to ship.

Raspberries got a little tight this week, supplies were harder to come by than usual and Driscoll pro-rated my orders by 50% which means everyone else was shorted also.

Plums are your best choice for hand fruit, lots of varieties and quality is excellent. We still have Peaches and Nectarines and we are starting to get our fall selection of Pears.

Here's the rundown:

Anjou- leading winter fruit

Bartlett- will run down, they are mostly a summer Pear and come in Red, Gold, and Green.

Bosc- firm and crunchy and holds its own when cooked
Butter- aka French Butter due to their sweet melting quality when cooked

Seckle- are small and crisp and are named after the 18th Century farmer who introduced them

Forelle- means speckled brook trout in German due to its red speckles when ripe

Ya Li – Green Chinese Pears with freckles and long tapered neck

Asian- aka Apple Pear, most popular type; yellow or light brown skinned fruit shaped like an apple, sweet and very crunchy when ripe

We do get a couple of different ones as the season goes on. Fall is also a great time for other items. We have all the decorations for the Holidays, Apple Cider fresh from Michigan, and lots of other items to choose from. Fingerlimes are still around, Candy Striped Figs (the best tasting Figs on the planet), Black Garlic, Black Kale, Okinawa Sweet Potato, Sugar Snaps, Wasabi Peas, Lemon Grass, Edamame, Shanghai Bok Choy, Baby Sweet Potato, Cippolini Onions, Persian Cucus.. just to name a few.



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Sale Items

Pineapple, Costa Rican 8ct \$15.95

Testa Item # 31603

Tomatoes Mix Heirloom, case \$26.00

Testa Item # 2459

Watermelon, Seeded Local Organic each \$3.95 **Testa Item # 70026**

Quantities are Limited. Available While Supplies Last!
BE SURE TO USE THESE ITEM NUMBERS!

Produce Quiz

I have been growing Europe and Asia since prehistoric times. I have been bitter my whole life so most folks are not real fond of me. My flowers are a bright yellow and white and from a distance look like the blanched center of a head of frisee. My flowers go well with gooseberries, can be made into fritters, or used to add intense flavor to various drinks. Due to my bitter taste I have traditionally been left as sustenance only for the poor. Today I can be found growing on country roads throughout the summer but leave us alone unless you want a meal of dust and pollutants. When we are prime, we are shiny and black. No matter where you find me or my flower, use us fast or we will simply melt away. Syrup, Wine and Elton John, are probably my most popular uses but I have been seen in pies tarts, savory pork sauces, foos, and made into vinegar. I have often been added to thin cheap wines to enhance their flavor. Outside of the culinary world I have been used for making dyes. I'm a good source of vitamin C other than being bitter; I have nothing to do with age. No AARP for me please.

Last Quiz Answer: Escarole