

TESTA PRODUCE Market Report

Outlook for the Week of
**October 3,
2011**



Market Report

I am beginning to wonder how people survived before we had recalls on food. In the past week we have seen Cantaloupe, Chopped Romaine, and Grape Tomatoes all have recalls. The Cantaloupe situation is by far the most serious because of the deaths associated with it. The other two were based on test results with nobody getting sick. It is great that information can flow so fast to solve a problem before it becomes a problem and because our level of technology is high, we can alert our customers quickly and stop any potential problem that may occur. Just so you are aware, many of our smaller competitors do not have access to that information and most of the time don't ever know a recall has been issued unless they see it on TV or read it in my market report. We feel food safety should be number one in any food operation and unfortunately it's not free, but nobody wants to pay for it. If you ever have a food safety problem and the press thinks you were lax on food safety, you will be tarred and feathered and you will also be looking for work in Alaska. Don't skim on food safety- it's not worth it.

As you already know by now, we do not use Colorado Cantaloupe ever, so we do not have that product, but the grower did distribute to parts of Illinois and other competitors. So my suggestion would be to ask where your distributor got their Cantaloupe and be prepared to answer those questions from your customers as well.

The Grape Tomato recall was based on ONE pint of Organic Grape Tomato testing positive in a random test performed by the USDA. Based on that, A&W issued the recall, that is abundance of caution, but it was the right thing to do- and the recall did affect us. We were able to very quickly know where any of the affected Grape Tomatoes went and notify the customers to destroy them. It is ironic that these were

Organic Grape Tomatoes that were affected. Most people would not think Organic product would have the same problems as conventional. I would tell you any product can get infected so don't think yours is safe just because it's Organic. It can happen to any item, any time, and any company. Just hope its never you.

We have good news on several fronts: Yellow Squash and Zucchini are going down as predicted and Avocados are also falling across the country. What is happening is the market is getting flooded with product, so prices are pretty reasonable this year. The USDA let Peru ship in Avocados; so that combined with Chile and the Domestic growing areas caused the market to retreat from the super high prices they were charging. We are waiting to see where the bottom goes.

Beans have gone back up again; they cannot decide what to do. One minute they go down and the next they are up again. Cucs are steady and quality is excellent. Carrots are down, Celery is steady, and Organic is back again. One thing you probably didn't notice with the Deardorff Organic Celery, is the box. That box is one of the first recyclable Wax boxes in the produce industry. Deardorff is also building a LEED Certified building in California and is one of the country's top Organic growers. They know how important it is to take care of Mother Nature and also charge a fair price for their product, and they do a great job.

They want more Organic in American diets and know the best way to do that is price the product so guys like me can buy it; and when I can, I do. Asparagus is steady and price is down. Eggplant is still high, Green Onions are still high, Boston Lettuce is steady, Romaine is down, Romaine Hearts are steady, Brussel Sprouts have come down but still are not cheap, and Broc is steady. Box Potatoes are falling fast, Red Potatoes are higher, Fingerlings are steady, and Ken-

Market Report, Cont'd...

nebec Potatoes are steady also. Make sure you store your Potatoes in a dry area; they will cook up better if they are at room temperature.

Tomatoes are steady for now. Lots of Heirlooms are available and price is great. Large size Tomatoes still are taking a while to ripen up. Most shippers are afraid to ship ripe fruit. Michigan still has some product, mostly 4x4, 4x5, and Cherry Tomatoes but not for long. Our Illinois farmer has Potatoes and will have product most of the fall and part of the winter season. So we will still have Local Potatoes for a while.

Plums, Pears, Mangos, Papaya, Kiwi, Star Fruit, Apples, and Grapes are going to be the main guns going into the fall season; we will have plenty of the other fruits to choose from also, but for starters those would be our choices. Black Figs are going strong so keep them moving and Candy Stripes are also around. Pomegranates are back - you can just get the seeds if you want, but give us one-day notice. Passion Fruit is back also. Now many of you do not know how Passion Fruit got its name, the story goes: in New Zealand a farmer stumbled onto a tree containing Passion Fruit, but he didn't know what it was. He brought some home to his wife and she didn't know what to do with it either. So she brought it to the neighbor, who just happened to be a doctor- but not a medical doctor, more of a natural healing type- who proceeded to cut the fruit up and eat it, cook it up, and tried it in different drinks and recipes; and while doing all of this, seeing if there were any medical effects. What he discovered was women and men said their sex lives improved after eating the fruit and they were extremely passionate with each other. So he named the fruit Passion Fruit and all of New Zealand kept it under wraps for years. But eventually word got out. Nowadays Chefs find all kinds of ways to use Passion Fruit but if it has the New Zealand effect, how cool is that. Now all we have to do is figure out how to grow a tree in our house all year round.

Strawberries are starting to improve slowly but we still rejected more than we sold last week. Blackberries are much better this week and price will be coming down. Blues are just OK and Raspberries are fine as well.

Honeydews are improving and Brix level is going up. Honeydews are trying to fill the Cantaloupe gap but it's not the same. We do have Cantaloupe and its from Arizona and California. We are going to have Mag Cantaloupe, which are the super sweet ones, sometime after Monday. Those Melons will also be excellent. Don't forget Grape-fruit season has started and it will only get better. Navel Oranges are a month away but we do have off-shore

Navels if you need stuff that doesn't look green. Speaking of green looking Citrus, it is that time of year where Lemons and Oranges start to re-green. In some lots it's not too bad, in others its real bad. Our Lemon shipper tells me that in a Choice Lemon, they can have up to 60% greening and still be Choice grade. I find that number ridiculous and told them not to send me product like that because I cannot use it. My suggestion would be to look at your usage and if its for high profile events or customers, switch to #1 Sunkist product. It is all yellow but does have a higher price. Customers count most and I would rather you have a happy customer instead of an unhappy one.

Rains in Guatemala have caused issues with French Beans and Baby Peeled Carrots. Supplies are coming in with black spots and decay. So turn your product quickly to avoid this issue.

Where are my Sale Items?

They have been RELOCATED!
Now, you can find them on Facebook, Twitter, and on our Website. Make sure to check those out to get the hottest deals for this week!

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Produce Quiz

My number is 613. That means a lot depending on what part of the world you are in and what religious holiday's you celebrate. From the ancient land of Persia to Russia, from the Himalayas to Afghanistan I am truly a fruit of the gods. Arriving in America via Spanish sailors I was well known to Moses, Persephone (the goddess of fruit) Olearuis and Mohammed. Along with my magic numbers I have often been called the forbidden fruit or the fruit of fertility. My Faberge style jewel-case skin is inedible and leathery tough with a turret-like calyx. This protects the ruby colored treasures inside. I am three inches in diameter and grow on a tree that can grow up to 23 feet, but I never make it that high. I am usually pruned to 6 or 12 feet. Prior to fruiting I bear large, trumpet shaped flowers. If treated with TLC I can be stored for up to 3 months after harvest. Don't pick me early as I do not ripen off my tree. Most often eaten fresh (With seeds swallowed or not), my sweet, tart pulp is also used for concentrates, syrups, drinks, soups and desserts. These days they even market my insides without my leather jacket. I have a high citric acid content which accounts for my tartness. I am also a good source of potassium and vitamin C. According to Greek Mythology, six of my seeds are responsible for winter. We should find them and set them free.

Last Quiz Answer: Elderberry