

TESTA PRODUCE Market Report

Outlook for the Week of
**December 12,
2011**



Market Report

Being in the produce business means you are always watching the weather. It's just a fact of life. There is always weather somewhere out there that is causing some problem and somehow it hits the poor produce guy. Sometimes it's the farmers and they can't get their fields planted, weeded, or harvested. Other times it's the truckers and we can't get the product to our warehouses. Sometimes it's local and that kills your business and my trucks sit on the congested and clogged road for hours waiting to make your deliveries.

DISCLAIMER: My staff will tell you that one of the primary reasons I watch the weather is to see if my golf game is still on. I take the 5th amendment on that one.

My neighbor is a pilot for one of the really big major airlines (I won't tell you which one but I'll give you a hint – they declared BK earlier this week). He writes a really cool blog which I read sometimes and he will be the first to tell you that 99% of the operational disruptions aren't caused by passengers, maintenance, Air Traffic Control or other controllable factors. Most are caused by weather related issues. Lately he says it has been getting worse and worse. In the last couple of months the Winds in California, Repeated and intense storm up the East Coast, Mountain Waves over the Rockies and monumental low pressure over the Midwest has made for endless delays and countless turbulent flights.

He has another theory. The seasons have shifted. They are closer to meteorological seasons than historical ones. He claims that winter is really Jan – Mar. Spring is starting sometime in April. Summer in July and Fall not until October.

Why the tirade on the weather? Well it just plain sucks in the growing regions. And it's going to affect you. Normally, I would sit here and paraphrase some of the problems into nice quick concise sentences. But this week I am giving up and just going to cut and paste some of the rash of emails that we have received this week.

- Asparagus - Supply is already compromised and has been since Friday last week with Mexico all but done, very little production from Ica, Peru in the south (primary production region) and limited supply coming out of Trujillo, Peru in the north (secondary production region). Anticipated supply issues during the month of December have started much earlier (12/02) and become more apparent over a shorter period of time than what the industry has seen for many years. For this reason, we anticipate the supply shortage to become more severe than last year and last longer, at least into the end of the first week of the New Year.
- Berries - The very cool weather we have been experiencing over the last 7 days in California has finally slowed the harvest down to a crawl. Most growers had to pull out of their fields today as there was

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not enough red fruit for them to harvest. The fruit in California will continue to show 30% or more white shoulder and sides because of the cold temperatures occurring in the growing regions. In order for the fruit to gain full color it will need to have at least a week of 70 degree temperatures. Besides the white shoulders and sides there is still water damage, bruising, bronzing and light decay showing up in the packs. The forecast is calling for cool temperatures into the weekend then a chance of rain Sunday night into Monday, if this happens it will make the quality situation even worse.

- Broccoli and Cauliflower are tightening up due to freezing type temperatures in Yuma. Supply will fall short of demand especially for the two upcoming holidays.
- Celery - This market is way higher. The cold temperatures have slowed the growth of this commodity and that is going to cause smaller heads and less yields. The quality is fair and you are going to get some tip problem.
- Romaine - The romaine market is stronger. Supplies are lighter. Suppliers are dealing with ice in the fields which is causing harvesting to begin much later than normal. Blister and epidermal peel are issues we will be dealing with for the next couple of weeks.
- Green and red leaf also will have the same issues as romaine. Demand is high and the fields are impassable for heavy equipment. Hand harvesting will slow down picking and production.
- LETTUCE The lettuce market is active. A few suppliers started the week sold out. Ice on the plants has delayed production with all growers. Epidermal peel and blisters are going to be issues caused from the cold weather. And Lettuce carton weights continue to be light with 35-40 pounds on average.

There are lots of other items that are going to be expensive or in short supply next week, but these will be the highlights that tell the tale.

On the bright side we are starting to see some Peaches, Apricots, and Cherries. They may be a little

pricey but they are a nice addition for the holidays.

Just a heads up and we will remind you again of our holiday schedule. We are closed on Sunday December 25th and Monday December 26th (the legal holiday). Customer Service will be available on that Monday to take your orders for Tuesday. Or you can leave them on the voice mail. Same scenario for New Year's Weekend. We will be closed on Sunday January 1st and Monday January 2nd (the Legal Holiday). Customer service will be in on that Monday as well.

Produce Quiz

I originated in Ancient China and Eastern Asia, and I am a fundamental food in many Asian and European countries. In the 1800's Chinese gold prospectors brought me to the United States via California. I am often called the staple food of the poor, but was referred to as a "precious thing" in 17th century Chinese literature. People call me by many names and most of those names are incorrect. I am often called celery or mustard, but people are wrong to do so. In Laotian I am even called hach us. Since I am a precious thing, simply asking for me by name is not enough, you will need to recognize me in a crowd. So use your accomplished eye when picking me out of the crowd of leafy vegetables. To aid in your quest I will tell you that I have long glossy white stalks and deep green leaves that are shaped like spoons. In my natural and pristine state I am packed full of vitamins A and D. So you should call me by name because in choosing me you will get two veggies for the price of one: leaf and stem. As a baby I am tender and can be mixed in a salad. My head is white and is formed by long glossy stalks that are fleshy, and crisp, and have a milder taste when cooked. My raw leaves are tangy and peppery in flavor and become sweet and tender when cooked. My leaves taste best when added after my stalks have been cooking for a bit. I can be stir fried, boiled, or steamed, but taste best when stir fried and seasoned with ginger, sesame seeds or hot peppers. Cooked I am an excellent source of potassium, vitamins A & C, folic acid and iron.

Last Quiz Answer: Rambutan



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