



Produce News May 2018 Think Fresh



A Peek at Peak Seasons

Apples: Most varieties of Apples out of Washington are in peak season.
Bell Peppers (Eastern): Green Bell Pepper is in peak season.
Eggplant (Eastern): Eggplant is coming into peak season

Market Alerts

Bell Peppers (Eastern): Good supplies for now
Berries (Raspberries): Supplies remain very limited and market prices are higher.
Citrus (Oranges): Demand exceeds supplies of small size fruit 113s/138s.
Eggplant (Eastern): Good supplies. Good quality.
Squash (Eastern): Very tight supplies.



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Apples

Market Steady/Higher
Quality Good

Washington still has a good amount of most varieties of Apples available. Honeycrisp, Braeburn, and Jonagold will be the first to finish up for the season with these varieties down to 20% or less. Red Delicious movement has been great due to export causing the lower end prices to firm up as availability get tighter. Sizing is peaking on 88-113s. Gold Delicious movement is steady with sizing peaking on Prem/Wax #1 80-100s. Pricing is steady on these sizes. 125 count Golds and smaller have seen a slight increase in pricing due to limited availability. Regional shippers (Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New York) are winding down for the season which is putting more pressure on retail bags that take 125 and smaller. Granny Smith movement is strong with most pricing steady except for the 100 count and smaller which have a soft market due to large volumes left in storages. The Gala market continues to be good. Look for this market increase on the smaller sizes in coming weeks. Fiji demand and markets are steady with sizing peaking on 88-100 counts. Quality on all flavors has been good with few reports of issues.

Bell Peppers

Market Stead
Quality Good

There are good supplies of green pepper for now. The crop is transitioning to central Florida, but there is not a lot of acreage in that region. Quality is good in all regions, but we are starting to see less jumbo and extra large in south Florida which signals, the end of their season is coming. Growers are reporting they are working on the tail end of their last plantings. The pepper market has been very reasonable, but we look for a quick turn around when south Florida finishes. Georgia's start date has been delayed by cool weather. It is looking like the 3rd or 4th week of May.

Strawberries

Market Steady/Lower
Quality Good

Supplies are improving. The weather looks to be ideal for the next week in all growing regions. Oxnard will be trending down as we move forward, but Santa Maria, Salinas and Watsonville will be increasing. The transition between growing regions has been slower this year due to late season cold weather, but we expect things to change rapidly over the next two weeks. More shippers are ramping up harvest in Salinas / Watsonville this week, and we will see good availability by next week. Santa Maria harvest will continue to increase, and the quality is expected to be good. Market prices have been up and down over the last two weeks, but will level out this week and we will see aggressive volume opportunities by the weekend. All shippers expect to have good availability and quality as we approach the Mother's Day pull.

Broccoli

Market Steady
Quality Good

Broccoli supplies are abundant from all growing regions. The markets are also competitive with volume deals to be negotiated. The overall quality is really nice with minimal yellowing, decent crown size, and little dehydration. We will continue to see this trend into next week.

Carrots

Market Steady
Quality Good

California carrot supplies are good on value-added packs and medium-size carrot. We are now seeing a better percentage of jumbo sizes coming out of the fields.

Cauliflower

Market Steady
Quality Good

We have plenty of supplies of cauliflower from Salinas and Santa Maria. The market is competitive and will continue into next week. The quality has been nice with little bruising/brown spotting, weights in the 26 to 29-pound range, and a full range of sizes.

Celery

Market Steady
Quality Good

This market remains steady like the previous week. All sizing is available, with the best quantities coming in large sizing, twenty-four counts in particular. All reports indicate the overall quality continues to be strong. This commodity is an excellent commodity to promote. Supplies and pricing will be steady. Some shippers are flexing.

Lemons

Market Steady
Quality Good

Good availability in both the Central Valley and the Ventura/Oxnard areas. Central Valley is peaking on 140s and larger sizes; heavier to fancy grade. Ventura/Oxnard is peaking 140s/165s/200s: heavy to the choice grade.

Limes

Market Steady/Lower
Quality Good

Limes supplies will continue to improve gradually as we move forward. Weather forecasts call for temps in the mid 80's for the week, with a chance of light rain early next week. No major disruptions in production or availability are expected. We are seeing heavier volumes on smaller sizes (200-250ct) and less volume on the larger sizes (110-175ct). Market prices are slowly adjusting down, but no drastic swings are expected. We can expect to see supplies continue to improve and markets level out for the next 2-4 weeks.



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Oranges

Market
Steady/Higher

Quality
Good

We are now into the late varieties of navels and eating quality is some of the best of the season. Size structure is mostly large sizes 72s/56s/48s and very few of the small size fruit 113s/138s. These small sizes are extremely tight and will remain so for the balance on the Navel season. California Valencia harvest has begun in a limited way by some packers for export. Growers are size picking for 72s and larger sizes that export uses, but we are seeing some fall out of smaller sizes for domestic shipments. Volume for domestic shipments still looks to be 2 to 3 weeks away.

Leaf Lettuce

Market
Steady/Higher

Quality
Fair

Romaine has softened in the marketplace, unlike green and red leaf which is stronger. Production is finished in Huron on all leaf items. Romaine hearts have softened as well and will likely be off of escalated pricing in the next few days. Expect light availability on green and red leaf for the entire week. Production in Santa Maria is light as well. Slight mechanical and a little twisting is all to talk about regarding defects.

Cucumber

Market
Steady

Quality
Good

Cucumber supplies are steady; demand has been slow. Growers are reporting pack outs with a high percentage of selects, leaving a wide range in pricing. Supplies are coming from south Florida with light volume starting in the central part of the state. Quality is good in most places. Cool, windy weather has created a high percentage of select with some scaring issues.

Onions

Market
Steady

Quality
Good/Poor

The transition from storage crop to new crop shipping out of Southern California and Texas is here. Quality is being reported good. Sizing is good on both yellow and reds out of California with Texas peaking on Jumbos and smaller. Idaho will finish for the season with flying colors by next week. They had a good run with quality and pricing most of their storage season. Washington still has a handful of shippers that will ship into the middle of May. Quality is good peaking on jumbo in both yellow and reds.

Green Grapes

Market
Higher

Quality
Good

We are at the tail end of Chilean green grapes with Mexico starting in the next two weeks. Supply is low, but there is not much demand, so shippers are trying to make what they have left, last until Mexico can fill orders. The quality is generally good, but everything is expensive at the moment, with premium green grapes going in the \$50.00 range. Make sure to check all green grapes upon arrival,

Potatoes

Market
Steady/Higher

Quality
Good

Storage supplies are still being packed out of Idaho, Washington, Colorado, and Wisconsin. Markets on most size cartons have firmed slightly over last week with retail bags steady. This trend should continue into May. Quality is good with very few quality issues being reported upon arrival.

Red Grapes

Market
Steady

Quality
Good

The red grape market is steady and Chilean product will last until the end of May. Mexico will be starting in the next few weeks, but most shippers will continue to sell Chilean fruit to fill orders. Quality is reported as consistent and good, with plenty of sizes and varieties available.

Tomato Eastern

Market
Steady

Quality
Excellent

Eastern tomatoes remain abundant and priced aggressively to keep product moving. FOBs from the Homestead, Immokalee, and Naples districts have dipped dollars below the mandated minimums of their Mexico grown counterparts with more farms breaking ground this week in Palmetto/Ruskin further extending the supply exceeds demand marketplace. Round tomatoes are still trending large in size where XL gas greens continue to be the cheapest/best value on the size spectrum at a dollar savings against large and medium fruit. Similarly, Roma tomatoes are widely available and being offered below Mexico minimums to entice buyers. No different than the larger fruit, the grape and cherry tomatoes in the bite-size category are selling for the lowest prices of the year. Favorable weather over Florida growing regions continue to foster growth in the fields and forecasts for the rest of the month are for a flat market as farms continue to crank out excellent supply.

Iceberg Lettuce

Market
Higher

Quality
Good

Production in Huron is finished. Salinas has moderate to good production, depending on the supplier. There is a gap in the marketplace. Production will continue to exist out of Santa Maria, and Salinas. Demand is up. The overall quality is good with some occasional puffiness, insect damage, and ribbing. Weights are to average 42-45 pounds. This market is expected to gain in strength.

