



Week of June 8, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

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Prepare yourselves for a wild ride this week. Growers are having various issues with crops right now. As predicted **Tomatoes** have gone a little crazy in the last week, and doubled, or in some cases tripled, in price. Along those lines several other items have taken a big jump. They would be **Cauliflower**, **Red Grapes**, **Broccoli Crowns**, **Green Beans**, **Baby Arugula**, **Head Lettuce**, and **Roma Tomatoes**. A lot of the price spikes are being caused by weather related issues, as is the case with almost all produce increases. Some of the pricing problems will be over quickly and a few will not.

Green Beans are still high but should start to come down soon. **Cucumbers** are down, but we are now seeing the effects from all the rain that Florida received recently. **Cabbage** is steady. **Bok Choy** is steady but Napa is shooting up in price. The **Onion** market is changing. During the summer is when Onions switch growing areas, and that causes issues with price and supply. Red Onions are going up right behind

Yellow. Green Onions are steady. Leaf **Lettuce** is steady, Romaine is active, but price is stable for now. **Box Potatoes** are steady for now, but change is coming. **Zucchini** is down a little. **Yellow Squash** is also down a little. **B&W Arugula** has been a real challenge for everyone for the last two weeks, production is way down and supply has been sporadic at best, and unfortunately it doesn't look any better for next week. Summer is your best time for hand fruit, and if you are one of those people who call and ask "why can't I get ripe peaches and nectarines like the grocery store?" Here's why- we don't display product at room temperature all day, we keep it refrigerated because that's how produce distribution works. We will gladly heat up/ripen an item for a customer if they let us know in advance of their needs. When you keep fruit at room temperature for days at a time, it will ripen fast and that's what happens at your local grocery store levels. At our level and every other produce distribution level, we don't sell our

product that way. It doesn't mean we can't get ripe fruit, we do on occasion, but it has to be turned much quicker than non conditioned fruit. There is much more to ripening fruit than I can say here, but we are able to ripen fruit. We try to buy the best possible product for you so in the end you will have the best flavor possible. Sometimes that means buying product a little greener but with better flavor when ripened rather than buying marginal quality product and ending up with disappointment.



Blueberries are from Texas and you can not get a better deal on Blueberries than right now when they are in season, so buy them now. **Blackberries** are still very good and priced reasonably. **Raspberries** are also a good value. **Strawberries** are still an excellent value and will be that way for a few weeks.

Spring Sensations!

Texas Blueberries

Texas Peaches

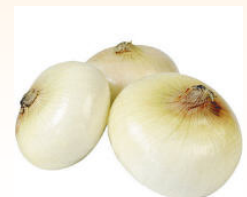
Texas Tomatoes

Texas Sweet
100 's Tomatoes

In the Spotlight

Vidalia Onions

The Vidalia® Onion is an exclusively Georgia grown yellow granex hybrid known so well for its sweet, mild flavor. The unique combination of low sulfur soil and the mild climate found in the 20 county production area of south Georgia produces the sweet flavor of the Vidalia Onion. It's a mild, succulent onion that is delicious raw on hamburgers, in a garden salad, cooked in your favorite recipe or just eaten raw. That sweet mild flavor has become a gourmet favorite.



Do you know your ripe from wrong?



Melons (cantaloupe and honeydew): Smell is the best indicator of flavor and ripeness. Once picked melons will ripen in color, texture and juiciness, but not ripeness. Shake the fruit. If it rattles, it's mushy inside. Soggy or sunken spots are a sign of spoiling.



'Food, Inc.' offers troubling view of US food industry

NEW YORK — The new documentary "Food, Inc." begins with idyllic scenes of American farmland, panning from golden fields of hay to a solitary cowboy rounding up a herd of cattle. Then the camera zooms in on a grocery cart overflowing with packaged food and rolling down the aisles of a gaudily lit supermarket.

Eerie, horror movie-style music swells in the background. It's meant to signal the audience that the pastoral fantasy of agrarian America on everything from packages of breakfast sausage to cereal boxes is not what it seems, that great danger lurks behind the cheery images of 1930s-era red barns and white picket fences.

Director Robert Kenner is bent on showing us a far grimmer reality. He tells of dust-choked poultry houses where chickens never see the light of day and are pumped so full of chemicals they produce more meat than their organs can support. Eventually they collapse under the weight of their abnormally large breasts and die before reaching the slaughterhouse.

He shows us industrial feed lots where cows are fattened on chemical-enhanced feed and forced to spend their days standing ankle-deep in manure.

Kenner relates the heart-wrenching story of Republican-turned-activist Barbara Kowalczyk, who prowls the halls of Congress with her mother to try to force lawmakers to enact food safety legislation that she believes could have saved the life of her 2 1/2-year-old son Kevin, who died of E. coli poisoning 12 days after eating contaminated hamburgers.

Kenner is hoping his film will raise awareness of the enormous price in health and safety that he says Americans pay to gorge themselves on the relatively cheap calories that stock supermarket shelves courtesy of a handful of multinational corporations.

Just as the Oscar-winning 2006 documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" helped galvanize the fight against global warming, Kenner and his partners want to spur legions of activists to rise up and take aim at lawmakers and government regulators they believe have been corrupted by lobbyists for agribusiness.

An alliance of trade associations that represent the nation's meat and poultry producers have set up a Web site to counter virtually every claim in the documentary, from the contention that E. coli contamination could be reduced by feeding cattle grass instead of grain, to charges that federal inspection agencies are understaffed and ineffective, and foodborne illnesses are on the rise.

The food industry says the film has "an astonishing number of half-truths, errors and omissions" and that scrapping current production methods in favor of locally grown, seasonal organic food would result in a dramatic increase in food prices and fewer fruits and vegetables year-round.

Janet M. Riley, senior vice president at the American Meat Institute, says that contrary to the menacing image presented in the film, the industry — comprised of "ordinary, hardworking people" — provides "the safest, most affordable, most abundant food supply in the world." She also says it would be foolhardy to abandon modern food production methods during a global recession, when people are starving in parts of the world.

"Why would we want to turn the clock back to a less efficient way to produce food?" she says.

Kenner's arguments will be familiar to readers of "The Omnivore's Dilemma" author Michael Pollan, whose numerous books and articles have decried the physical and even moral hazard of the industrial food system. Pollan is featured in the film, as is "Fast Food Nation" author Eric Schlosser, who wrote the best-selling 2001 expose of the fast food industry that was later turned into a movie.

Pollan, who has criticized industrial agriculture for a decade, calls Kenner's documentary "the most important and powerful film about our food system in a generation."

He says the director has broken new ground with his reporting on such things as a new, high-tech system of meat processing that bathes beef filler in ammonia to kill harmful bacteria.

Even though alternative agriculture represents just a small part of the U.S. food industry,

Pollan says he is "full of hope" about the future. He cites the booming demand for organic food and the growing popularity of farmers markets.

According to the USDA, sales of organics have more than quintupled, increasing from \$3.6 billion in 1997 to \$21.1 billion in 2008.

Kenner, too, is optimistic, ending the film on an uplifting note. He sees a hopeful model in the fight against Big Tobacco, which also seemed invulnerable to attack by health and safety advocates — until it wasn't.

Like Pollan, Kenner is heartened by what he's seen so far from the Obama administration.

Pollan, in particular, applauded Michelle Obama's decision to plant an organic garden on the South Lawn of the White House. Kenner says the president won't be able to tackle his other priorities of reforming health care and halting global warming without changing the way Americans produce and consume food.

So what do Kenner and Pollan believe the average person should do if they want to shun the agribusiness model?

Says Kenner: "Go to a farmers market whenever you can. Eat a little less meat. Read labels when you go into a store. Shop the outer rows of the supermarket. Cook at home. Buy less processed food."

And Pollan? All of that, and also this: "Get involved in your school lunch program. Get junk food out of the whole school. Sign up with a listserv for one of the many groups that's tracking this. Your congressman/woman needs to hear from you."

Still, Lowell Catlett, dean of the School of Agriculture at New Mexico State University, says U.S. consumers actually have a pretty good deal. Before World War II, a quarter of a million Americans died every year from a combination of unsanitary food and water and inadequate sewage facilities. "Overall, we have a safer food system," he said.

The film opens June 12 in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, with wider distribution beginning June 19.