



Week of June 29, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

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It looks like we are going to have another week of 100+ temperatures! I can't begin to stress enough the importance of **keeping the cold chain in tact**. Any temperature abuse will cause a serious drop in shelf life and quality. Keep all processed and lettuce items towards the back of your coolers and away from the doors where temperature fluctuations are most likely. Ok, back to business. Prices on some items are heading up rather quickly. **Romaine** is higher, **Lettuce** is steady, **Leaf** is steady on both Red & Green. We are expecting good supplies of all these products so it's just demand that will effect price. **Broccoli** and **Broccoli Crowns** are headed up. Brocolini is inching downward. **Cauliflower** is going up, along with **Celery**. **Beans** are holding steady, **Eggplant** is the same. The **Onion** Market is getting out of control, prices have doubled in a week and look to continue to be strong for at least two weeks. Green Onions are steady, but **Leeks** are higher and quality is fair at best. **Potato** prices are steady, which is not the norm for this time of year.

Usually we see an upward tic, but so far nothing. This year is very different than past years, demand is way down and so it doesn't appear as bad as most years, but we will wait and see what happens once we are into July & August - that's when things really heat up. **Red Potatoes** - both B's & A's are steady for now. Excellent Stone Fruit is available now, we are getting Tree Ripe fruit, which is very nice when you leave it out at room temperature to ripen. We also have more **Texas Peaches** - they have been excellent in flavor and looks. The key is knowing how to leave them out before refrigerating them for shelf life. The main key is soften and the way to test for that is VERY GENTLY touch the peach or nectarine and with very little pressure, squeeze the outside if you feel a lot of give they are ready. If no give, leave them for another day and repeat the process. It will take you a few times to get the hang of it, but with practice, you will be a star. Washington **Cherries** have arrived. IF you are a **Melon** person, you will be in heaven right now because of all the different

varieties available: **Arava, Butterscotch, Canary, Casaba, Crenshaw, Galia, Hami, Ogen, Santa Claus, Sharlin, Sugar Queen, Tuscan and Pepino**, to name a few. This is your best time to buy **Figs** and get the most for your money. Black Mission are available and are really delicious. **Watermelon** is higher, Yellow is still available, Personal size is also available. **Strawberries** are running very good right now, but that doesn't mean you can't get a bad one every now & then. Remember, they harvest berries from all over California and not all areas are the same. It's like buildings - they are all different, but all still buildings. **Raspberries** have pushed past their "peak" and, prices have shot up in a few days and look strong for next week. **Blackberries** are running well and look that way for all next week. **Blueberries** are still your best bet.



Summer Spectaculars!

Texas Peaches

Black Mission Figs

Walla Walla Onions

Vidalia Onions

In the Spotlight

Pink Lemons

The pink lemon is actually its own variety. It is not a hybrid, rather simply unique to the Eureka lemon family. Although it is not the most productive of lemon varieties, perhaps because their variegated leaves are low in chlorophyll, the fruits produced are highly edible and delicious. Younger pink lemons are variegated with green and white stripes on the outside while the flesh is pink. As the lemons mature the variegation reverts and the pink flesh intensifies. Pink lemons have a tangy and tart flavor, a rich lemon scent and very few seeds if any. Their leaves are highly fragrant, considered the most fragrant among lemon trees.

Do you have the ripe stuff?

Don't be put off by funky-looking fruits. Lots of wrinkles means they're very ripe and at their peak. Passion fruit are best kept chilled in a refrigerator. They will keep for about two weeks if kept in this manner. Do not keep them in a warm temperature or in direct sunlight as this will accelerate ripening.





Fresh figs gain popularity at retail chains, restaurants

Abby Stutzer - The Packer Richard DeBenedetto, owner of J&R Orchards, Chowchilla, Calif., said chain markets are showing more interest in figs.

Linda Cain, vice president of marketing at Valley Fig Growers, Fresno, Calif., said figs might be used more at restaurants and eateries, and enjoy upticks in some chains.

Figs tend to perform better in boutique stores, where shoppers have higher incomes, she said.



“The fig industry is mimicking what has happened to some higher-end fruit. (The market is) soft, but strengthening,” Cain said.

Whole Foods in Monte Ray, Calif. plans to give figs as much shelf space as nectarines, DeBenedetto said.

Many figs are being placed in display-ready cases to make them easier for retailers to stock, Cain said.

Maury DeBenedetto, owner of DeBenedetto Fruit Co. LLC, Fresno, said

consumers are resistant to paying the same prices they paid for figs in the past.

Tonetta Simone Gladwin, owner of Passion Fruit Farms, Merced, Calif., predicted more retail business and direct sales this year.

Co-marketing figs with other products also may improve sales.

Marc Marchini, director of cost analysis and production at J. Marchini Farms Inc., Le Grand, Calif., said one of his customers will co-market fresh figs and gorgonzola cheese this year.

The fig industry is trying to educate consumers and professionals about figs. Increasing fig awareness and reminding consumers to buy may help improve fig sales.

“Our biggest problem is our customer base. Most are 64 and older. We need to get the 64 and younger crowd educated about figs,” said Alan Weeks, president of K&W Farms, Palm Desert, Calif.

In the past, traditional fig consumers were mainly members of ethnic groups who grew up eating figs, according to the May industry update from the California Fig Advisory Board, Fresno.

The fig industry plans to recruit prominent food personalities to help boost fig popularity.

George Kragie, president of Western Fresh Marketing, Madera, Calif., said in the past food celebrities such as Emeril Lagasse, Mario Batali and Martha Stewart cooked with figs. They put figs in front of the public’s eyes.

Karla Stockli, chief executive officer of the California Fig Advisory Board, Fresno, traveled to New York City and promoted the fresh fig crop to media this year.

“We have A-list appointments, from Oprah, Rachel Ray, (and) Food Network to dinner with registered dietitians that are leading influencers in NYC to media and broadcast.”

Once consumers eat figs at food events and trade shows, they like what they see, Cain said.

“We are trying to educate people about figs and get them to try the product.”

“We think we’ll enjoy a good selling year. Consumers are more aware and interested about figs,” Cain said.

Summer’s Market Musings

BABY FUJI APPLES
 BABY GALA APPLES
 BABY GRANNY SMITH APPLES
 BING CHERRIES
 GOLD KIWI
 LYCHEE NUT
 KING OYSTER MUSHROOMS
 PASSION FRUIT
 TEXAS PEACHES
 ENGLISH PEAS

BROCCOLI SPROUTS
 BLACK MISSION FIGS
 BABY PEELED RAINBOW CARROTS
 PINK LEMONS
 MEYER LEMONS
 SHISITO PEPPERS
 MAITAKE MUSHROOMS
 TEXAS SWEET 100 TOMATOES
 TEXAS TOMATOES
 BLACK GARLIC

SWEET SNACK TOMATOES
 SHISITO PEPPERS
 KUMQUATS
 CALALOU LEAVES
 LAVENDER WANDS
 SATURN PEACHES
 WHITE PEACHES
 PURPLE WAX BEANS
 DRAGON TOUNGE BEANS

Some of these items are limited so first come, first served.
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