



Week of July 20, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

Volume 5, Issue 12

It's a busy summer in the produce world. Mature crop Mexican **Avocados** have finished up and we should see new crop on the market within the next 10 days. Supplies will be very light until mid August. The new stuff will be low on oil content, this means longer ripening times to achieve more flavor. Prices are definitely on the move. However, quality is excellent right now. **Leaf Lettuce** is still having a rough time due to scorching summer temps. Tip burn is being seen on almost all leaf varieties, **Boston, Green Leaf, Red Leaf, Green** and **Red Oak**. Our **Bluebonnet Hydroponics** are a good alternative especially if you have a VIP event coming up soon. A mix case of lettuces are available, or you can buy single varieties. The Red Galactic is absolutely stunning on the plate. If you need a romaine heart alternative they have baby green or red romaine available. **Romaine Heart** supplies continue to be scarce. Extreme heat was seen in

the south county region this past weekend. This will definitely take its toll on the quality. Low harvest yields have been reported from most suppliers. Fringe burn is being seen with all suppliers at harvesting time. There continues to be reports of internal browning and burn. The Hearts continue to have issues with cupping and not having the true romaine heart shape. Let's all do a rain dance and maybe we will see some relief soon. Green leaf is steady for now. The **Potato** market is moving and up is where it's going. Larger Potatoes are becoming very scarce. The few storage facilities that still have potatoes are saying they don't see a lot of large size potatoes in the sheds. Red B's are high and Red A's are steady. Fingerling Potatoes are going strong and plenty of supply and good value. **Zucchini** and **Yellow Squash** are steady, quality is fair at best. **Strawberries** are supplies are low this week. The plants in the Salinas / Watsonville growing area are now past

their "peak" production window. We are seeing more and more over ripe and bruised berries with many shippers quoting such defects at shipping point. What does this mean, low supplies high demand and higher prices overall. Driscoll berries are your best bet for the next couple of weeks. However, overall quality on all strawberries is fair at best. **Raspberries** are lower, and **Blueberries** and **Blackberries** are steady. **Broccoli** is steady and **Cauliflower** is higher. We are seeing some yellowing and a little browning, but nothing major as of yet. **Citrus** is on the move which is normal for this time of year. Citrus, lemons in particular, normally don't go really wacky until August.



Summer Spectaculars!

Butterscotch Melons

Cavallion Melons

BBQ Onions

Gold Kiwi

In the Spotlight

Red Cactus Pears

Known as Tuna in most Mexican markets. Peeling is definitely required. Marketed fruits have been mechanically depricked but some stinging invisible hairs do remain. Hold the fruit in tongs or wear rubber gloves to prevent penetration of prickly fibers into skin. Slice off ends; cut a lengthwise slit in the fruit end to end. Slip the tip of the knife under the cut; skin the fruit. Once done, peeling a prickly pear is as easy as unwrapping a piece of candy. Always best chilled, its sweetness makes many delicious edibles. As pretty to see as pleasing to the palate, use as a filling for tarts and cakes. Puree fruit; add to margaritas or lemonade for a cool summer treat. Serve as an unusual ice cream topping or use to make a pallet cleansing sorbet. It's delicate melon like flavor pairs well with chicken and fruit salads Pureed fruit may be frozen for later use. To store, refrigerate ripe fruit up to three days for optimum quality.



Do you have the ripe stuff?

Select kiwifruit with no bruises or soft spots. Avoid fruits with wrinkles or signs of exterior damage. Buy firm kiwifruit and let them ripen at room temperature for a juicier flavor. A kiwifruit is ripe when plump and slightly soft to the touch with a fragrant smell Ripen kiwifruit at room temperature for 3 to 5 days. If necessary, ripe kiwifruit can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 7 days. If they need to be stored longer, put kiwis in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. The plastic bag helps reduce moisture loss so kiwifruit stays fresh longer. Putting kiwifruit near fruits that produce ethylene gas, such as apples, bananas or pears, will speed up the ripening process. So if you want to ripen kiwifruit quickly, put kiwi in a bag with these kinds of fruit for a day or two.





Restaurant chain calls summit to discuss obesity

Ashley Bentley - The Packer

With pending legislation addressing topics like food available in schools and requirements for posting nutrition information in restaurants, it seems the foodservice industry is being held accountable for the choices of its consumers.

One restaurant chain, Jason's Deli, is working to convince food-service operators and restaurateurs that they play a large role in consumer health. The chain is touring the country to discuss ways the foodservice industry can fight childhood obesity.

"We're going around and trying to stir up insight into the epidemic we've got ourselves in in this country with child obesity and type-2 diabetes," said Rusty Coco, co-owner of the Beaumont, Texas-based chain. "We're trying to get restaurants interested in cleaning up their menus."

Jason's Deli executives plan to travel to 14 cities to meet with school board leaders, organizations and academics to start the discussion, Coco said.

The motivation for the project came when Coco started looking at ways to improve his own menu.

"I couldn't believe some of the stuff that's in food today that's

not good for you," he said. "I couldn't even eat at my own restaurant because I practiced healthy living."

The company recently revamped its children's menu by reducing sodium, saturated fat and calorie levels in the meals, and focusing on organic ingredients. The chain offers organic apple and carrot slices on its children's menu, as well as celery sticks, fresh fruit and a small baked potato.

The company set Aug. 1 as its goal to remove artificial colors and dyes from the children's menu and salad bar.

"So we're really concerned about the youth of our nation," Coco said. "It's the first time the generation now isn't as healthy as the previous. It's crazy to think we're raising kids who aren't as healthy as we are."

Coco said he thinks the key is in education and awareness — consumers need to be able to read and interpret nutrition labels, and need to be aware of processed food.

"Fresh produce is wonderful," Coco said. "It's part of the answer in my mind. Kids will form habits, and if we get kids screaming and yelling for fresh produce, think about what we could do."

Summer's Market Musings

Some cool summer menu ideas compliments of Chef Gwen Kwavli Gulliksen

- **Green & White Asparagus Pasta Salad with Spiced Olives**
- **Carrot & Savoy Cabbage Slaw with Devilled Crab**
- **Edamame with Grilled Shrimp & Sake Vinaigrette**
- **Haricot Vert Salad with Chilled Tenderloin & Blue Cheese**
- **Roasted Beet Salad with Endive & Grapes**
- **Chopped Bok Choy Salad with Miso Salmon & Cucumbers**
- **Roasted Curry Cauliflower with Grilled Chicken & Apples**
- **Garlicky Chard with Pulled Smoked Duck**
- **Persian Cucumbers with Bay Scallops & Dill**
- **Grilled Eggplant with Roasted Peppers & Fresh Tomatoes**
- **Shaved Fennel with Valencia Orange & Tarragon**
- **Herb Salad with Edible Flowers & Shallot Vinaigrette**
- **Jicama, Mango & Persian Cucumbers with Lime & Chilies**
- **Hearts of Sweet Gem Grilled Caesar & Parmesan Croutons**
- **Chilled Poached Leeks with real Thousand Island Dressing**
- **Frisee with Bacon & Poached Egg**
- **Baby Iceberg "Cutie" Wedge**
- **Assorted Heirloom Melon with White Peach & Cherries**
- **Classic Green Papaya Salad**
- **Pea Shoots with Grilled Lobster & Yuzu Vinaigrette**
- **Creamy Heirloom Potato Salad with Chives, Tarragon & Dill**
- **Heirloom Radish with Chervil & Sea Salt Crème Fraiche**
- **Grilled Baby Squash with Cherry Tomatoes & Pesto**
- **Classic Heirloom Tomato Caprese with Basil Leaves**
- **Sweet Gem Hearts with Ripe Tomatoes & Blue Cheese**

