



Week of July 27, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

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Asparagus is looking better this week. We're seeing better supplies on standard sizing from Mexico compared to the last couple of weeks. Small and extra large also have good availability. **Jumbo Asparagus** supplies are still very short. **Avocados** are the same. **Strawberries** have not gotten any better this week. Quality is still fair at best, and supplies are still are very tight. However, the weather looks to improve throughout the week so let's keep our fingers crossed. **Raspberries, Blackberries, and Blueberries** are steady. **Grapes** are looking excellent for the next couple of weeks. We just received a new shipment of black grapes and they are heavenly. Red Grape growers are saying we will have a bumpy transition from the red flame grapes to the crimson variety, but this will be still a few weeks away

so stay tuned. **Romaine** and **Romaine Hearts** are still in the same boat as they have been over the past few weeks. Tip burn and internal browning, is still being seen. **Leaf Lettuces** are also still trying to recover from the heat. With lighter yields and shorter shelf lives make sure to keep the cold chain intact and watch rotation. **Head Lettuce** is looking much better, but we are still seeing some russet spotting. **Potatoes** - 40-50ct size Idaho's are very, very, limited right now. Actually they will remain that way until the next big dig which normally happens in August/September. While were on the subject of limited supplies I need to mention sweet **Corn**. Due to heavy rains that happened a few months back (around Iowa all the way to the East coast) farmers were not able to get into the fields to plant. So at this time there are very limited

amounts of corn ready for harvest. If you haven't noticed corn has been rising steadily for the past several weeks. Growers have not given us any estimates yet as to when prices might start to come down. **Limes** are on the higher side due to some weather issues, **Lemons** are higher. There is still plenty of stone fruit out there if you're interested. If you're looking for something really different

Sugar Plums, Elephant Heart Plums, Dapple Dandy

Pluots, and Dino Egg

Pluots are available on a pre-order basis. Several types of boutique **Heirloom Melons** are also available - **Arava, Butterscotch, Cavaillon, and Sugar Queen.**



Summer Spectaculars!

Kohlrabi

Fresh Wasabi Root

Passion Fruit

Stone Fruit

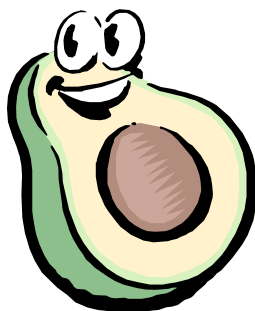
In the Spotlight

Pepino Melon

The mild-mannered Pepino melon is gentle but tasty company blended with other fruits in fresh fruit salads. Considered a fruit showpiece, this melon makes a unique gift for a melon fan. Use as a refreshing garnish for almost anything. Slice or spoon out flesh. Chill to serve. The skin is edible but if tough and unpalatable it can easily be peeled away. Ripen at room temperature. Store ripe Pepino melons in a plastic bag in the refrigerator up to three days. The Japanese especially value this low-key fruit. In South America and Japan, the pepino is enjoyed just as it is, that's it. New Zealand cuisine serves it every way imaginable, as a garnish for soups, fish, or meats; sauced; with prosciutto; as a seafood and fruit salad ingredient; and in desserts.



Do you have the ripe stuff?



Avocados do not "ripen" or "soften" on the tree, they ripen after they have been harvested. Depending on the time of the season, green fruit can take anywhere from two to seven days to ripen when stored at room temperature. You can speed the process by placing your avocados in a paper bag with an apple for 2 to 3 days at room temperature. To check for ripeness, gently squeeze the fruit in the palm of your hand (avoid using your fingertips), when they yield to gentle pressure, they're ready to eat.



Small Farms Challenge Expansion of FDA's Authority

Jane Zang - The Wall Street Journal ADAMSTOWN, Md. ~ Small to mid-size farms and those growing organic foods are challenging the congressional effort to expand the Food and Drug Administration's food-safety powers. The farmers say food-safety legislation that passed the Energy and Commerce Committee in June gives the FDA authority to set production standards on their farms and charge them the same registration fees large food processors would be required to pay. The agency, they fear, could also require them to keep more records so contaminated products could be traced more easily.

"I'm not against food safety if we have a problem," said Nick Maravell, who has a 165-acre organic farm here, about 40 miles from Washington, D.C. He said he already keeps detailed records to comply with existing U.S. Department of Agriculture rules for organic products. "To do it again would be time- and cost-sensitive," he said.

Smaller farmers aren't alone. Cattle ranchers and grain farmers, already regulated by USDA, don't want to be subjected to an overlay of FDA food-safety rules.

The legislation exempts farms and other facilities regulated by the USDA, which oversees the safety of meat, poultry and eggs. But the farmers say the bill's language is ambiguous, partly because many farms do more than grow crops or raise livestock. Mr. Maravell, for example, grows and processes animal feed.

The pushback from farmers and ranchers fueled a turf battle in the House between the Energy and Commerce Committee, which oversees the FDA, and the Agriculture Committee, which oversees the USDA.

Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin C. Peterson (D., Minn.) earlier this month threatened to hold hearings to stop the bill from reaching a full House vote, and staff members from the two committees have been working on language to clarify which farms would be regulated under the FDA legislation. An Agriculture Committee aide said Monday that staff members from the two committees are reviewing language in the hopes of finalizing



an agreement. But that may ~ or may not ~ satisfy farmers and ranchers.

The House could take up the legislation as early as this week. Similar legislation has been introduced in the Senate, but it is unclear when that chamber will act. The measures were introduced early in the new Congress after a string of food-borne illnesses involving spinach, lettuce, peanut butter and hot peppers and other foods.

Major consumer groups along with the Grocery Manufacturers Association, which represents large food makers and processors, and

United Fresh Produce Association, which represents the fresh-produce industry, largely support the legislation. Food companies say it would help boost consumer confidence in the aftermath of E. coli, salmonella and other outbreaks.

"The outbreaks clearly demonstrate a number of food-safety problems originate on the farm," said Caroline Smith DeWaal, food-safety director at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group in Washington. "It's critically important that food-safety measures to prevent contamination of food and vegetables start on the farm and continue all the way through processing."

Small farmers, however, fear unintended consequences. "I'm a little guy," said Mr. Maravell. "They are assuming I'm doing something like the Salinas Valley." An E. coli outbreak involving spinach grown in California's Salinas Valley led to a nationwide recall in 2006.

Mike Taylor, who advises FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg on food safety, said farmers shouldn't be concerned. He said the FDA will consider the needs of small producers and work with the USDA and other state and federal agencies to carry out the new responsibilities. The agency would also solicit public and food industry comment before making its regulations, Mr. Taylor said.

"The bill has been responsive to the concerns of the farm community to make the boundaries clear," he said. "This is not a one-size-fits-all new system."

Farmer's Market Summer Sightings

- PURPLE HULL PINK EYE PEAS
- RANIER CHERRIES
- RAINBOW SWISS CHARD
- BLACK RADISH
- YOUNG THAI COCONUTS
- GOLD KIWI
- SUNCHOKES
- ROMANO BEANS
- HEIRLOOM CHERRY TOMATOES
- MEYER LEMONS
- KEYLIMES
- GREEN FIGS (Limited)
- BLACK FIGS
- RED OR WHITE CURRANTS
- CHAMPAGNE GRAPES
- BABY FENNEL
- CHEF'S MIX ORGANIC
- WILD MUSROOMS