



Week of September 1, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

Volume 6, Issue 4

Summer Spectaculars!

Kabocha Squash

Baby Apples

Starfruit

Asian Pears

In the Spotlight

Labor Day

For a lot of people, Labor Day means two things: a day off and the end of summer. But why is it called Labor Day? Labor Day is a day set aside to pay tribute to working men and women. It has been celebrated as a national holiday in the United States and Canada since 1894. We will be operating normal business hours Monday September 7th. Have a safe and happy holiday!

The market next week is a little unstable. **Beans** are steady. **Corn** is going up, but we don't think it will get too high because demand is normally only for the Labor Day holiday. Growers know people like to barbecue for Labor Day and corn is a popular item. **Cucumbers** are down. **Eggplant** is steady and quality is good. **Red Peppers** are showing signs of life, the market has firmed up a bit. **Yellow** are in that same boat. **Green** on the other hand are not in the boat - they are down and in plentiful supply so prices are very reasonable all week on all sizes. **Yellow Squash** and **Zucchini** are steady. **Broccoli** is steady, **Cauliflower** and **Celery** are also steady. **Romaine** is higher on both **Regular** & **Romaine hearts**. High heat in the Salinas Valley this past week will most definitely take its toll soon. Across the board, **Spinach** is tight. **Box Potato** prices are unstable right now, nothing new there. **Fingerling Potatoes** are still excellent quality and prices are reasonable. **Onions** are settling down a little, prices on super Colossal are high but Regular Onions are steady. **Red Onions** are steady and in good supply for now. **Strawberries** are going to get a

little rough for the next couple of weeks. Growers are not happy about the quality of the Berries. They received a lot of rain which makes the berries very tender and leads to bruising, which most customers are not thrilled about. My suggestion is move them quickly or they will mold up fast as well. **Blueberries** are getting more expensive because Michigan is coming to an end faster than expected. Growers will switch back to 4 or 6oz containers very soon. **Raspberries** are very reasonable next week and **Blackberries** are higher. **Grapes** are steady for now, but California may end early we'll have to wait and see. **Navel oranges** are still weeks away. **Lemons** are steady, **Clementines** are available, and **Cherries** are done. Washington is now shipping hand fruit and quality is outstanding. All kinds of specialty items are available - **Graffiti Eggplant**, **Black Garlic**, **Cranberry Beans**, **Kiwano Melon**, **Meyer Lemon**, **Red & Gold Tamarillos**, and **Veggie Sweet Peppers**, just to name a few.



Do you have the ripe stuff?

Select oranges that are well-formed, firm and heavy for their size with a smooth skin surface. Tan or brown speckling on the skin, known as "russeting" does not affect the eating quality. To determine ripeness of oranges and all other citrus fruit in order to pick them from the tree, the following indices of maturity are known: The best indices of maturity for citrus are Brix, acid content, and the Brix/acid ratio. External color is a function of climate more than ripeness, and is a poor indicator of maturity.





Restaurant industry eyes potential rebound

The restaurant industry may be on its way to a comeback, according to the National Restaurant Association's most recent survey of the industry. July's Restaurant Performance Index scored the industry overall at 98.1, slightly higher than June's rating and almost two points higher than the industry's record low at the end of 2008.



The association surveys restaurant operators each month, evaluating current conditions and expectations to gauge the industry's health. With 100 as a break-even point, numbers less than that reflect contraction in the industry, and numbers greater than that reflect growth.

Although numbers are creeping up, the index is below 100 for the 21st consecutive month, starting its downward slope two years ago. The Expectations Index is the stronger of the two components, and mostly responsible for the shift upward.

"The RPI was at a record low in December 2008, when it stood at 96.4, and improved a bit in the first quarter of 2009," said Annika Stensson, director of media relations for the association. "Since then, it's been a little shaky and remains in contraction mode."



The Expectations Index, a measure of restaurant operators' outlook for sales growth, the overall economy, staffing and capital expenditures, was up half a point from June, to 99.4. The number of operators who expect higher sales the next six months than they had the same time the previous year was up 6%, to 31%. Another 33% expect their sales to be lower.

When asked about the overall economy, 32% said they expect economic conditions to improve in the next six months, up from only 24% who said the same thing in the last index. In July, 24% said they expect economic conditions to worsen.

The Current Situation Index, a measure of same-store sales, consumer traffic, labor and capital spending, was up 0.2% from June, posting an increase for the first time in three months. This measure, however, has been below 100 for 23 months.

June reflected an all-time record low for same-store sales when compared with the same time in 2008. Only 22% of operators reported positive sales in June. In July, that number rose to 26%, with 58% reporting lower same-store sales. In December of 2008, the number of operators reporting same-store sales decline was up to 66%.

Consumer traffic remains down for 23 straight months in July, and only 23% of operators reported an increase in traffic compared with July 2008. That number was 19% in June. Meanwhile, 59% reported a decline in traffic.

Capital expenditures in both the Current Situation Index and Expectations Index remained on par with June.

"While there are signs of improvement for the restaurant industry, they may have not solidified into a steady rise in the RPI yet, Stensson said.

What's in season?

- APPLES, BABY
- CAPE GOOSEBERRY
- KEY LIMES
- FIGS
- CHAMPAGNE GRAPES
- SECKEL PEARS
- ASIAN PEARS
- BUTTER PEARS
- COMICE PEARS
- POMEGRANATES
- RHUBARB
- STARFRUIT
- ASPARAGUS, PURPLE
- ASPARAGUS, WHITE
- BABY ICEBERG LETTUCE
- BLACK GARLIC
- ELEPHANT GARLIC
- DANDELION GREENS
- TUSCAN BLACK KALE
- BEECH MUSHROOMS
- MAITAKE MUSHROOMS
- OYSTER MUSHROOMS
- WILD MUSHROOMS
- CHEF'S MIX MUSHROOMS
- BBQ ONIONS
- PARSELY ROOT
- HEIRLOOM POTATOES
- BLACK RADISH
- ICICLE RADISH
- FRENCH BREAKFAST RADISH