



Week of September 21, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

So, we can finally say so long to summer and finally welcome in some cooler weather. Well, that's the idea at least. This is a transitional time of year so until we get into new growing areas things are going to be a little shaky in the produce world. **Cucumbers** are higher next week since Michigan is coming to a close on production and Baja's numbers are weak as product availability is shifting to other areas. **Eggplant** is steady and the quality is good. **Fennel** is in good supply and the prices are reasonable. **Broccoli** is steady and we shouldn't see any big price increases. **Cauliflower** is holding steady for now and the supply is good. **Carrots** are the same. **Head Lettuce, Romaine, and Leaf** production will take a hit this week as insect pressure, mildew, fringe burn and heat related issues impact yields. Some mildew and burn is possible as insect populations increase drastically in the warm temperatures. Temperatures are expected to reach triple digits in some parts of California, with record high numbers! Lighter supplies, lesser texture, shelf life and overall quality are expected as growers work through current acreage. **Spinach** production will also be affected as it remains susceptible to mildew pressure in the expected weather pattern. Supplies look to remain light for the near term. Another concern is the young seedlings and transplants in the southern growing regions set for fall harvests and the tender **Spinach and Spring Mix** ingredients that are very susceptible to extreme temperatures. Field evaluation continues throughout the Salinas Valley. We will be keeping a close eye on the weather as we move into fall harvests. **Super Colossals** are tight and are sizing smaller than normal and yes, prices are higher. Box **Potatoes** are steady in price but look to come down soon. There are plenty of Fingerling Potatoes available and yes, price is steady. **Baby Spinach and Baby Arugula** are having issues. One major grower is not producing and that is causing problems for everyone. **Green Onions** are steady but movement is slow due to recall notices from the past

few weeks. No illnesses were reported but it appears that a lot of operators are reluctant to return this item to the menu. The **Tomato** market is steady with good supplies. However, with the recent hurricane that passed over Baja we are expecting lower numbers, and the recent rains in Florida have slowed harvests. All **Berries** are higher until we really get going with offshore product. **Strawberries** are still having major issues and with the forecasted warm temps and rain we can expect berry quality to get worse before it gets better. **Stone Fruits** - some items are coming to the end like **Apricots** and some of the more specialty items but there still some decent supplies of **Black Plums** and **Nectarines**. **Grapes** are excellent. Both the Red and Green have been running great right now. **Yellow Watermelons** are still available but these will be the last for awhile. We are coming into **Pear** season which is a good thing. What you need to know with a Pear is how to ripen it without killing it. Each variety will Ripen a little differently so don't be surprised if it takes longer for a D'Anjou versus then a Bosc. **Figs** are switching to Brown Turkeys, and we have some **Texas Grown Gala Apples** that just came in! They are sweet, juicy, and fragrant. Seriously, open a case and you'll understand. We currently have Galas and are expecting more varieties soon. Right now they are running a little small, but very cute. Would look great if you poached it or made it into a petite apple dumpling! **Harvest Décor** is available and the **Pumpkin** crop is looking good. Remember we the run of the mill pumpkins, but we also have some great heirloom varieties available too! If you're looking for any **Candy** or **Caramel Apples** we can get them (please be sure to order 2-3 days ahead of time).



Do you have the ripe stuff?

Mature pumpkins have a hard exterior, which sounds hollow when you rap it with your knuckles. The stem should be attached, dry, and firm. Avoid pumpkins that have blemishes, these will spoil very quickly. Field pumpkins are best for carving. They are large, round, and have a stringy pulp. Field pumpkins are edible but do not taste as good as baking pumpkins. Baking pumpkins are also known as pie or sugar pumpkins.

They have a smaller seed cavity; more flesh, and are less stringy. They are also smaller, heavier, and have thicker stems. Uncut pumpkins should be kept in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place. Pumpkins will last for a month if unrefrigerated and three months if you place them in the refrigerator. Carry the pumpkin by the bottom so as not to risk damage to the stem. Please DO NOT pickup or carry pumpkins by the stem!!! The stem of a pumpkin cannot support the weight of the pumpkin. It will snap off and the pumpkin will fall and break. Remember only you can help prevent violent pumpkin death.



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Seasonal Sensations

Texas Gala Apples

Pumpkins all sizes

Indian Corn

Gourds

In the Spotlight

Italian Black Truffles

Black winter truffles have a distorted round to oval shape and can grow to the diameter of an apple or an orange, weighing in around two or three ounces. Having a scaly skin, the violet to black-colored flesh produces a fine web of whitish veins when the truffle reaches maturity. Their dark flesh also reveals this characteristic fine mesh of white veins. Releasing a sweet earthy aroma and offering a matching flavor, the truffle's elusive taste is somewhat vague and indiscreet. Truffle experts say a truffle must be tasted and its unusual texture experienced in order to fully understand this very mysterious dark edible wonder from the kitchen of Mother Nature.





Technomic predicts harsh foodservice environment through 2010

Ashley Bentley - The Packer For the first time in its history, Technomic Inc. predicts two straight years of negative nominal growth in the foodservice industry.

The Chicago-based research and consulting firm presented its findings at the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association's annual Forecast & Outlook Seminar in Newark, N.J., Sept. 17. The forecast included a 3.8% drop in nominal growth for all of foodservice in 2009, followed by a 0.8% drop in 2010.

Janet McCullough, director of special operations for Technomic, said the negative forecast isn't only a byproduct of the economy, but also of the maturation of the industry.

"There was a lot of overbuilding in the last few years," McCullough said. "There were huge unit increases, especially in restaurants, in the last few years, and now we're going to be losing a lot of those."

Restaurants won't have it quite as bad as other foodservice outlets, which include retail hosts, travel and leisure, business and industry, health care, vending, military and corrections, according to the outlook. Restaurants should post a -3.5% growth, while other outlets face a -4.4% growth in 2009.

In 2010, however, outlets besides restaurants, which make up 31.3% of retail sales, should fare just a hair better than restaurants with a -0.7% growth.

Retail hosts, including supermarket foodservice, convenience stores and other retailers, are actually expected to see nominal growth of 1.3% in 2009 and 2.2% in 2010, according to the outlook. Health care is also expected to fare better than other outlets with a predicted 1.7% nominal growth in 2009 and 2% growth in 2010.

"Consumers are starting to see the value," McCullough said. "You can get meals for four people for \$10, as opposed to feeding two people for \$20."

Prepared meals at supermarkets and other retailers also offer more variety than a traditional foodservice outlet, McCullough said.

Convenience stores are finally bouncing back from the rut they were in when gas prices shot up, McCullough said.

"When consumers are trading down from limited service, C-stores are cheaper," McCullough said.

Travel and leisure spending should be hit the worst with an 11.3% drop in nominal growth in 2009 and a 4.9% decline in 2010. The business and industry category is right behind it, with a predicted 10% drop in '09 and -2.6% in 2010.

"Business and industry is closely tied to employment," McCullough said. "As unemployment rates are skyrocketing, that's just going to be hit period."

The travel and leisure segment, like the restaurant segment, is dependent on discretionary spending, McCullough said.

"All the responses we're getting from hotels, for example, is that it's been a tough year, and it's going to be a tough year," McCullough said. "From the corporate end, so many are cutting back on travel expenses. And of those who go, they're not spending like they used to on food."

Nominal growth assumes an inflation on menu prices, so it is 2.5% less than real growth as predicted for 2009 and 1.5% less than real growth as predicted for 2010.

Although there should be some level of recovery when the economy picks back up, McCullough said the foodservice industry should not be prospering like it was.

"Foodservice is maturing," McCullough said. "Don't expect to see the growth rates we did in the last decade."

The other caution, she said, is the lasting effect on the recession on consumer psyche.

"It's going to limit the ability of operators to increase prices as we start coming out of the economic downturn," McCullough said.

Total foodservice retail sales in 2009 are predicted to hit \$588 billion, according to the outlook.

The International Foodservice Manufacturers Association plans to host its outlook conference twice more in September, on the 25th in Millbrae, Calif., and on the 30th in Rosemont, Ill.

Autumn is upon us! Some Fall festiveness for your table?

- Large Indian Corn
- Small Indian Corn
- Mini Orange Pumpkins
- Mini White Pumpkins
- Cannon Ball Pumpkins
- Gourds
- Large Hay Bales
- Mini Hay Bales
- Corn Stalks
- Wheat Bundles
- Fairytale Pumpkins aka Calabaza de Castilla
- Cinderella Pumpkins
- Jarrahdale Pumpkins
- Ghost Pumpkins
- Big Mac Pumpkins