



Week of October 19, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

The weather certainly has a way with wrecking havoc with the produce industry, and this autumn we are getting our share of horrible weather. Unfortunately the weather has claimed another victim, and that would be **Tomatoes**. They just took a huge jump and lots of people never saw it coming, especially the growers. Supply is the problem- all growing areas are behind schedule. We are still having big issues with **Strawberries**, **Lettuce**, **Romaine**, **Spring Mix**, **Baby Arugula**, and **Broccoli**, and **Cauliflower**. All of these items are unstable in price or are already sky high. We expect a few of these items will be back to normal shortly. **Beans** are higher. **Cucumbers** are steady, but **Seedless Cucumbers** are higher all week. **Celery** is heading into holiday season so expect prices to fluctuate. **Peppers** are moving, and up is the direction for all colors - Green, Red, and Yellow are all higher. **Green Onions** are steady, **Leeks** are the same, **Yellow Onions** and **Red Onions** are steady. **Zucchini** and **Yellow Squash** will be transitioning to Georgia and Mexico over the next few weeks along with most Cucumbers, Peppers, and Specialty Peppers, expect quality to be fair at best. As I mentioned earlier tomatoes took a big jump and that is on all **Tomatoes** and sizes- **Layered**, **Cherry Tomatoes**, **Grape Tomatoes**, **Clusters**, **Romas**, and **Yellow Tomatoes**. **Leaf Lettuce** is higher, **Boston** is higher, **Cauliflower** is starting to come down, all **Baby Lettuces** are going to get tight next week. **Baby Squash** and **French Beans**

are also higher. **Honeydews** and **Cantaloupes** took a big jump, some growers are very short of product and as a result prices have gone up. There are different prices for different sizes so you can get a better deal by switching sizes. **Minneolas** are back but high priced. A few good **Plums** are still around, but not many. There are plenty of **Exotic Fruits** available if you're interested. **Blueberries** are still having major issues with supply and are still sky high in price. **Blackberries** and **Raspberries** are fair and are going higher. **Strawberries** - still no change, quality and shelf life are almost nil at best. **Apples**- Approximately 15 days ago there was a freeze (temperatures in some areas down to 13 degrees) in the Northern part of Washington State that will significantly affect supplies throughout this year and into next. Small sized apples in all varieties remain extremely tight. This looks to continue throughout the entire season with carton counts expected to be down at least 5 million boxes total from last year out of Washington state. Red Delicious supplies continue to be very tight in Washington especially on the small sizes. Anjou **Pears** are going with better supplies in Washington this week and Bartlett pears are still going strong. There are also now varietal pears including **Bosc**, **Seckle**, **Concorde**, **Comice** and **Red Pears**.



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Seasonal Sensations

Texas Wheat Grass

Texas Pumpkins

Texas Herbs

Texas Gala Apples

In the Spotlight

Wee Bee Pumpkins

Approximately the size of a baseball, little ribbing and deep orange color these little pumpkins are perfect to use as individual soup tureens, or how about using them to hold a pumpkin crême brûlée? Each cavity will hold approximately 8 - 10 ounces. Unlike most small pumpkins these are great when cooked! Try filling with risotto and baking until the flesh is tender. Their small size makes them great not only for decoration but for carving too. Once carved place a votive candle inside for a one of a kind candle holder. Fill them with candy and pass out to your guests, or hollow them out and use for a vase. Their small size also makes them ideal for small children's hands!



So, what's in season that's different?

CARDOON
FENNEL POLLEN
BEE POLLEN
BABY ROMANESCO
BLACK GARLIC
ELEPHANT GARLIC
RED KURI SQUASH
BITTER MELON
ITALIAN BLACK TRUFFLES



Turban Squash

CHILACA CHILES
YOUNG GINGER
PURPLE LONG BEANS
YALI PEARS
GLOBE CARROTS
NANTES CARROTS
BABY COLORED
CAULIFLOWER
VIOLET BROCCOLI LTD



California table grape rain damage was hit or miss

Don Schrack - The Packer California's three-year drought came to an abrupt end - at least temporarily - Oct. 13 when a major rainstorm drenched most of the state. But many table grape grower-shippers were prepared for the storm, they said.

"We're 100% covered," said Sean Stockton, partner and chief executive officer of Sundale Sales, the marketing arm of Sundale Vineyards & Cold Storage, Tulare. "The insurance policy of the plastic did its job for us."

Grower-shippers guesstimated that about 25% of the remaining crop was not covered. If the weather does not cooperate, about half of that 25% could be beyond salvaging, they said.

The storm's rainfall totals ranged from more than 1.5 inches in Modesto at the northern end of the San Joaquin Valley to a trace or less at the valley's southern end.

The full extent of the damage may not be known until the end of October, Jim Howard, vice president of the California Table Grape Commission, Fresno, said Oct. 16. The damage could be minimal if the post-storm temperatures remain warm, he said.

Afternoon high temperatures were in the high 70s and low 80s since the storm ended.

Among those waiting for damage reports was John O'Rourke, president of RJO Produce Marketing, Fresno.

"But just driving around the valley I saw that many of the growers had prepared and had covered their vineyards," he said.

Among the uncovered acreage were vineyards owned by Simonian Fruit Co., Fowler.

"Our field manager thinks we're going to be OK," salesman Jeff Simonian said. "If there are any problems, we'll be able to trim them out before putting them in the cartons."

The storm did postpone picking in Simonian's fields. The harvest was scheduled to resume Oct. 17, he said.

Too much moisture on table grapes can lead over time to fungus growth, but the demand for the fruit this year will help to minimize any problems not caught by the pickers, Simonian said.

"The market is so strong the grapes are going out as fast as they are coming in from the field," he said.

Less than 20% of Sundale's fall crop was still on the vines when the storm hit. Harvesting continued without interruption, Stockton said, and Sundale will wrap up picking by the end of the first week in November. Because of Sundale's cold storage capacity, the company will likely have supplies of fall grapes through the end of the year, he said.

While the 24 hour rain totals exceeded an inch from Modesto south to parts of Tulare County, the southern end of the valley received very little precipitation.

"Our fruit remained absolutely dry," said George Galloway, salesman at Sunlight International Sales Inc., the marketing division of Jakov Dulcich & Sons, McFarland. "We dodged a big bullet in the Delano-McFarland area."

Some areas of Kern County did not record even a trace of measurable rain, he said. Rainfall in the McFarland-Delano area was less than .33 inch.

"If you're covered with plastic, a third of an inch in a 24 hour time period is not very much moisture," Galloway said.

Sunlight International also enjoys the luxury of expanded cold storage capacity, a project completed just before this year's table grape season began.

"We'll have plenty of grapes at least through Christmas," Galloway said.

A potential problem for southern Kern County growers would be another rainstorm. Winds gusting to above 50 miles per hour hit that portion of the valley and blew away much of the plastic that was covering vineyards. Another rainstorm could prove to be disastrous, growers said.

Seasonal Banquet Vegetable Ideas

- **BABY PEELED RAINBOW BEETS**
- **BABY PEELED CARROTS WITH TOPS**
- **BABY BOK CHOY**
- **CHINESE LONG BEANS, TRIMMED**
- **GREEN BEANS, TRIMMED**
- **FRENCH BEANS, TRIMMED**
- **YELLOW WAX BEANS, TRIMMED**
- **RED BEET PEARLS**
- **GOLD BEET PEARLS**
- **BRUSSELS SPROUTS**
- **CARROT PEARLS**
- **CELERY ROOT**
- **FENNEL**
- **PARSNIPS**
- **FINGERLING POTATOES, MIXED COLORS**
- **WATERMELON RADISH**
- **BUTTERNUT SQUASH**
- **ACORN SQUASH**
- **KABOCHA SQUASH**
- **YELLOW SQUASH PEARLS**
- **ZUCHINNI SQUASH PEARLS**