



**Week of November 2, 2009**

## Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

**Volume 7, Issue 1**

The ever changing produce world is still on a wild roller coaster ride this week and quite possibly well into November. **Asparagus** is higher this week as we continue the transition into new crop in Mexico. Given the inclement weather pattern and reduced yields **Broccoli** issues include yellowing, knuckling, and pale green appearance. The Big Processors are purchasing as much product as can be had and this will cause shortages in availability for carton business. Yuma will not begin production until approximately the second week in November. **Cauliflower** is in the same predicament. **Avocados** are steady, along with **Bell Peppers** and quality is good. **Strawberries** will continue to be limited throughout November and quality is fair at best. **Blackberries** are still just beginning in Mexico. Quality will improve as we get further into the season. **Blueberries** are also starting and look to improve over the next couple of weeks. **Texas Ruby Red Grapefruit** are available and are sweet and delicious. **Leaf Lettuce** - The next two weeks will see various issues on leaf items. **Romaine** will see characteristics such as brown spotting, browning up the rib, brown butts, fringe burn and internal burn. The weather fluctuations have been so extreme that the plants are fighting Mother Nature. The plants are tired. **Green Leaf** and **Red Leaf** have not had as many defects as romaine, but availability is lighter than the previous week. Production in Yuma has been set back slightly.

Expected harvest is approximately the third week in November. **Romaine Hearts** continue to be light in availability, and the quality is marginal at best. Fringe burn is still being seen upon arrivals. The hearts are twisted in growth with some suppliers. Due to weather conditions, some growers are reporting that translucent water spots are seen on all leaf items. Expect all leaf items to continue have issues on quality for the next few weeks with production from Salinas. In **Iceberg Lettuce** lightweights continue to be the main issue with lettuce. Internal burn, mildew and browning are also regularly being seen. This will continue likely throughout the week. Yuma will begin production for some suppliers the second to third week of November. Production has been set back by a week. Early signs of decay and light weights are characteristics so please be aware. **Tomato** production in Central California is on the decline as there only a couple of shippers going, and will be finishing this week. Some shippers are speculating about finishing by the end of the week, and others have expressed that there will be some light availability past next week but it will depend on how much damage there is in the fields. Volume is down and demand is moderate. We can expect to see higher markets and less availability. **Achieving color will be challenging.** On a brighter note Roma and Grape tomatoes are more available.

### Seasonal Sensations

Delicata Squash

Texas Basil

Texas Ruby Red  
Grapefruit

Texas Cameo

### In the Spotlight

#### Harvest Sensations Blog Site

**Did you know that Harvest Sensations has its own blog site? Harvest Sensation's Chef and Specialty Produce expert Gwen Kvavli Gulliksen is blogging about everything from recipes and menu ideas to current issues such as reducing food waste and the slow food movement. The site is not just for chefs! Gwen also loves to throw in a little food history and trivia too! It's perfect for any foodie. Check it out at**

### So, what's available that's different?

Arkansas Black Apples  
Orin Apples  
Pippin Apples  
Pomegranate Seeds  
Baby Purple Artichokes



Baby Brussel Sprouts  
Cactus Pears  
Bee Pollen  
Italian Chestnuts  
Korean Chestnuts

[http://harvestsensations.](http://harvestsensations.blogspot.com)

[blogspot.com](http://harvestsensations.blogspot.com)

or

[www.harvestsensations.com](http://www.harvestsensations.com)



## Diners looking for new flavors, trying more ethnic cuisines

People like to try new things – now more than ever, according to foodservice and retail industry reports.

Despite the shape of the economy, consumers aren't just going back to basics. They're looking for flavors from around the world, trying to find innovative tastes they've never experienced. Specialty produce companies are up on this trend, ready to supply ethnic restaurants with the tamarind or savoy cabbage they need, as well as consult the American restaurant on how to incorporate an item to set it apart from its competition.

Karen Caplan, president of Frieda's Inc., Los Alamitos, Calif., said ethnic food has been on the rise for a long time, but that the trend has more traction lately.

Retail sales of ethnic foods, which have been climbing steadily since 2004, are set to hit a record high of more than \$2 billion in 2009, according to a recent report from Mintel, a consumer, media and market research firm with U.S. headquarters in Chicago. Consumers are cooking different ethnic meals at home more often, and the foodservice industry generally sets the trend for eating at home.

"In regards to foodservice, they've always tried to differentiate themselves, being up with the next culinary trend, and it ends up trickling down to retail," said Robert Schueller, director of public relations for Los Angeles-based World Variety Produce, marketer of Melissa's brand specialty produce.

Schueller said the emergence of more varieties of specialty produce available on a year-round basis helps restaurants create different dishes

with ethnic flavors on menus.

"Guavas, for example, are now available on a year-round basis instead of seasonally," Schueller said. "And that's a staple ingredient in Mexican cuisine."

As much as chefs and restaurant operators tout seasonal menus, the truth is, when they find something that works, they want it to be a staple dish on their menus, and they want it to be available year-round, Schueller said.

Caplan said seasonal menus are picking up, though, even among chain restaurants, so whether a produce needs to be available year-round depends on the restaurant company.

Mexican and Hispanic foods make up the majority of the ethnic food market with 62% of sales at retail, according to the Mintel report, but the category isn't the fastest growing. Indian food saw a 35% sales growth from 2006-08, and Asian food had 11% growth.

According to Technomic Inc.'s 2009 Flavor Consumer Trend Report, consumers want new options at restaurants, and they want those options to be inspired by flavors from around the world. Technomic's consumer survey found 42% of foodservice consumers are more likely to visit restaurants with new or unique flavors on the menu.

"Now you go to the Cheesecake Factory, for example, and you'll find a lot of Asian foods, curry, and Mexican options," Caplan said.

Mexican, Asian and Italian flavors are mentioned on menus heavily, and both have strong ties to fresh ingredients, said Kelly Wiekkel, senior research analyst for Technomic and

author of the report.

Wiekkel said garlic and pepper flavors are especially prevalent in these three ethnic food categories. Hot and smoky peppers, chilies, jalapeños, citrus and lime are top flavors in Mexican cuisine, she said.

"Fruits seem to be appearing often on the menu as ingredients in tropical-style Mexican sauces, such as in the tamarind-flavored sauces at the emerging chain El Torito," Wiekkel said.

Chilies and other peppers are also popular in Italian and Asian cuisines, as well as aromatic citrus, garlic, ginger, orange and lemon in Asian cuisines, according to the report. Consumers reported lime and chili flavors in the top 10 among the most appealing flavors for them.

Consumers may have an idea of what they like, but they also reported a desire to try something new. Two-thirds of consumers said discovering a new flavor at a restaurant can persuade them to return, while more than half said they would want to try new dishes at that same restaurant. Consumers also reported being more interested in trying new flavors than they were one year ago, and they said they are willing to spend more on a meal with new or innovative flavors.

Caplan said some of Frieda's latest product introductions, black garlic and garlic delight, were two of the most well-received product introductions for the company.

In addition to Asian, Mexican and Italian cuisines, others on the rise are Spanish, Hawaiian, Tex-Mex, Greek and Caribbean and Mediterranean, according to the report.

## Third Coast Produce Holiday Hours



**Wednesday, November 25** - Customer Service closing at 12:00 pm

**Thursday, November 26** - Thanksgiving, closed

**Friday, November 27** - Normal business hours



**Thursday, December 24** - Customer Service closing at 12:00 pm

**Friday, December 25** - Christmas Day, closed

**Saturday, December 26** - Normal business hours



**Thursday, December 31** - Customer Service closing at 5:00 pm

**Friday, January 1** - New Year's Day, closed

**Saturday, January 2** - Normal business hours