



Week of December 14, 2009

Market News, See What's Cropped Up!

The majority of the country is taking a hit in winter weather and in many cases it is in the growing areas for winter produce. California is in a cold snap and that has put a damper on row crops and some specialty produce as well. Rain and late planted fields down south are not helping either. The combination of these two weather patterns has created a market where pricing is getting expensive. **Celery** is in the thirties and will stay there for a while, **Broccolini** will be tight for the rest of the week. **Broccoli** is going back up again and so is **Cauliflower**. **Cucumbers** are higher, **Artichokes** are going up, and certain sizes are a problem. At this time of year artichokes are on everyone's menu and that causes the price to go crazy. The bean market is still steady on regular beans, **French Beans** are higher, **Yellow Wax** are available in 5lb bags. **English Peas** and **Fava Beans** will be short for the next few weeks. **Green Onions** are steady but don't expect it to stay that way for long. Christmas is a big Holiday in Mexico and a lot of farm workers like to be home for most of the holiday, so Green Onions every year have short supply problems which of course effects price. **Yellow Onions** and **Red Onions** are fine for now and don't forget **Pearl Onions**. They are available Red, White, and Gold and make a great addition to Holiday Foods. The Pepper market has two big issues and not too much else. **Yellow Peppers** are very high priced and trying to find them is tough. Red Peppers are also very high priced. Green Peppers are plentiful and very reasonable in price. **Veggie Sweet Mix Peppers** are in short supply as well. Box **Potatoes** are not going up in price, however they are experiencing a different sort of problem. Temperatures in Idaho are well below freezing. This causes big issues getting Potatoes to packing sheds because growers are afraid of freezing the potatoes. What this means is it takes much longer to get trucks loaded and out, therefore causes problems with supply. Usually the problem only lasts a few days but it all depends on weather. Red Potatoes are still coming from Wisconsin and other areas, so they are not a problem. **Hard Squashes** are up a bit for next week, but that is more Holiday-related

than anything. **Leeks** are tightening up and so are **Rapini**. The **Tomato** market is still a train wreck. Prices are still very high, supplies are still very low and everyone is scrambling to get the right color and size for your customers. We expect this situation to continue for at least two to three weeks before Florida and Mexico get enough volume to reverse it. Grape Tomatoes are still high and Cherry Tomatoes look to come down. Yellow Tomatoes are mostly On The Vine and Yellow & Red Teardrops are crazy prices. Speaking of crazy prices, **Romaine** has finally come down from the stratosphere. Prices are steady and hopefully will continue into next week, but we will wait and see. **Head Lettuce** is also a bit better. Strong demand is keeping it higher than normal. **Leaf Lettuce** is lower, Boston is still high. Spring Mix is steady, and **Baby Lettuces** are the same. All Baby lettuces are experiencing major quality issues, and decreased shelf life is one of the biggest issues we are seeing. **Frisee** is having issues mainly with **Circus Frisee**, mostly because of cold weather which is keeping the frisee from bleaching the center. On the fruit side of things, prices are even more crazy than veggies. The **Grape** market is wacky Red has come down a bit and Green Grapes are sky high. Isn't that special? Prices on grapes have been known to go high at this time of year, so this is not unexpected, but usually they stay under 50. Supplies of off shore product will be coming shortly and that will drive the price down but not for a few weeks. Our next really big problem child is **Strawberries**. Supplies are nonexistent and prices are double what they were. Getting product is the problem. California is done, Mexico is very light, Florida is very light for another 2 weeks, and then we will be fine. So, as you can see a very high priced market for 1-2 weeks. **Raspberries** are also high. **Blackberries** are very reasonable, **Blueberries** are excellent and good quality. Outstanding citrus options, as you know, are available all next week. Great **Texas Oranges**, **Pears**, **Apples**, **Texas Grapefruit** are all available, to name a few. Don't forget **Kumquats**, **Satsuma Mandarins**, **Blood Oranges**, and **Clementines!**

Volume 7, Issue 7

Seasonal Sensations

Eucalyptus Honey

Baby Apples

Texas Ruby Red Grapefruit

Satsuma Mandarins with Stem and Leaf

Holiday Greens & Things



Mixed Wreaths

Holly 5#

Poinsettias

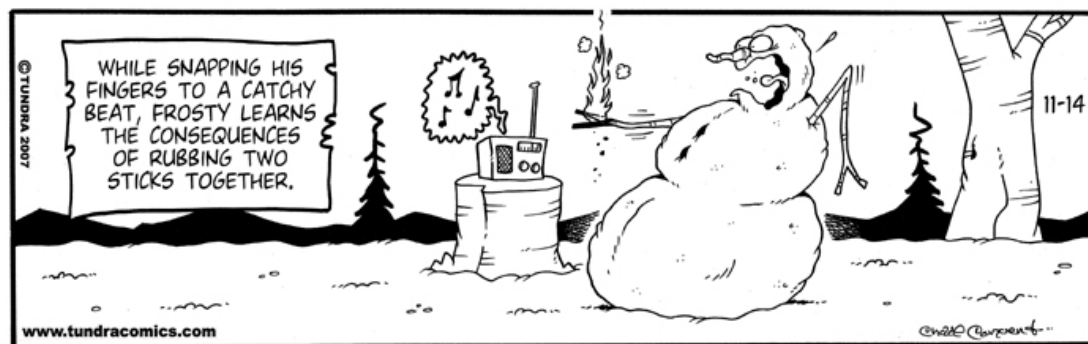
Mini Decorated Trees

Chestnuts 5#

Mixed Nuts in Shell

Egg Nog

Apple Cider





Tomato, lettuce prices may not drop anytime soon

Andy Nelson - The Packer Lettuce and tomato prices, which soared in November, remained high in December, and grower-shippers said prices for many lettuce and tomato items wouldn't drop anytime soon.

On Dec. 8, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported prices of \$27.50-29.50 for cartons 24s of iceberg lettuce from Arizona, up from \$11.45-12.45 last year at the same time.

Cartons 24s of Arizona romaine were \$24.45-27.50, up from \$13.50 last year.

Don't expect those romaine numbers to move much in the immediate future, Michael Boggiatto, president of Boggiatto Produce Inc., Salinas, Calif., said Dec. 9.

"I don't see where things get better, in terms of lower prices, in the next couple of weeks," he said. "There's been some colder weather down south in the desert, with some damage."

Blistering and peeling have increased because of the cold snap, Boggiatto said. Also, crews have been thinning crops more than normal.

"I don't think there will be a huge shortage, unless they get some big freezes, but I think the prices will stay pretty high for awhile," he said. "I don't think there's a lot out there."

Florida tomatoes also continued to sell for significantly more than last year at the same time. According to the USDA, 25-pound cartons of 5x6 mature-greens were \$25.95-26.95 on Dec. 8, up from \$11.95-12.95 last year at the same time.

Smaller tomatoes were slightly cheaper, but still well above last year. Cartons of 6x7 greens were \$20.95-21.95, up from \$11.95-12.95 last year.

Demand was still exceeding supply on 5x6s, but was weakening on 6x6s and especially on 6x7s, Tony DiMare, vice president of the Homestead, Fla.-based DiMare Co., said Dec. 9.

Florida volumes had been picking up, DiMare said. But that was before excessive rains hit the Palmetto/Ruskin growing area.

"The rains the last three weeks are taking their toll," he said. "Palmetto, Ruskin will wind down quickly, and volumes will probably drop off a bit."

While volumes out of the Immokalee, Fla., growing region should be steady by the week of Dec. 14, volumes would likely be light at the beginning of the Homestead, Fla., deal, which is expected to begin about the first of the year, DiMare said.

Prices for 5x6s would likely remain high in the short term, but there could be "a lot of downward pressure" on prices for smaller tomatoes, DiMare said.



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

