

# Fresh News



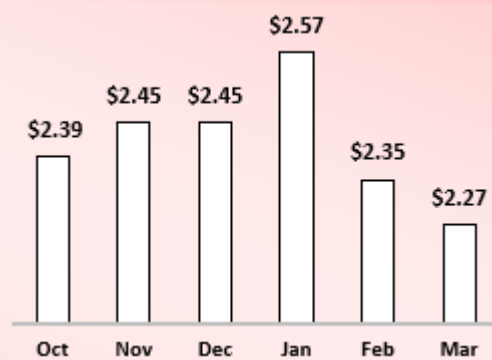
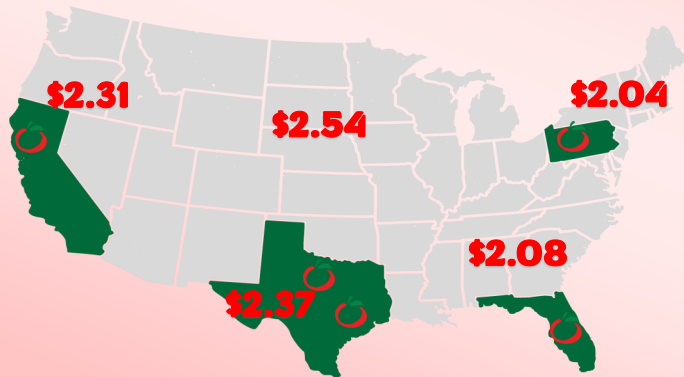
## Market Alert

- ◆ Asparagus
- ◆ Avocados
- ◆ Cucumber
- ◆ Eggplant
- ◆ Lettuce Ice-berg
- ◆ Lettuce Leaf
- ◆ Pineapple
- ◆ Tomatoes



## National Reefer Rate per Mile (Last Week per DAT)

## Trend



## Weather Alerts

Location	Current Weather	Current Temp	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
YUMA WEATHER	clear sky	86°F	86°F / 57°F	95°F / 64°F	99°F / 68°F	95°F / 68°F	90°F / 61°F	90°F / 61°F	84°F / 55°F
HURON WEATHER	broken clouds	72°F	72°F / 48°F	81°F / 55°F	84°F / 59°F	84°F / 64°F	68°F / 55°F	68°F / 50°F	64°F / 48°F
GUADALAJARA WEATHER	few clouds	86°F	90°F / 52°F	91°F / 54°F	93°F / 54°F	91°F / 54°F	90°F / 57°F	88°F / 54°F	90°F / 54°F
HOMESTEAD WEATHER	broken clouds	72°F	79°F / 61°F	84°F / 64°F	90°F / 70°F	88°F / 68°F	82°F / 70°F	79°F / 70°F	79°F / 72°F

# Tomatoes

*Alert*



## East Coast

This week, Florida's roma tomato production is at its lowest point in the spring season as growers adjust to new conditions and January's mild weather has impacted yields. The sizing is on the larger side, and the quality has been good. But if we start looking at the Estero crop, we'll see a little less size. In general, once fresh crops are planted and the impacts of the cool weather subside, the industry will witness more consistent harvests and volume increases in two to three weeks. The weakest week of the spring tomato season is presently taking place on Florida fields. Due to cool temperatures throughout the January fruit set period, a number of growers are navigating the shift from South Florida to the Ruskin/Palmetto area, and they are all reporting extremely low yields this week. Maturity is taking longer than anticipated, and we have only been able to select a couple times in the last week because to the restricted quantity. We anticipate that the light volumes will persist for another week, after which we ought to observe improvements. It's important to note that those producers in the Ruskin/Palmetto region who start a bit earlier will start up slowly in the following two to three weeks, with seasonal numbers to follow. We are seeing more grapes this week as new crops come online and warmer weather is helping to enhance yields in the present harvests, despite the fact that Florida harvests have been light for the past few weeks.

## Mexico

Light production is currently occurring as Mexico's roma crops move from winter to spring plantings. In seven to ten days, we should observe increasing volume as the warmer weather helps to increase maturity. However, because many growers have decreased area for spring output due to continued water issues, the overall amount is anticipated to be lower than the January/February statistics. Due to farms switching from winter to spring plantings, the Culiacan area is likewise experiencing a lighter supply scenario this week. Although there might be a little more fruit in the coming week due to warmer temperatures, spring volumes are predicted to be lower than those in January and February. Until the spring crops come online in late April, producers in East and Central Mexico are likewise in short supply. As current land is depleted and new plantings are anticipated to come online in mid-April, Mexico's grape tomato production is anticipated to decrease somewhat during the next weeks. Light supplies are currently available in Baja and East/Central Mexico, and as spring acreage comes up in May, volume will grow. While Canadian producers have started spring output, Mexico's tomato production is still just mild. As the season progresses, anticipate greater output from Canada in the coming weeks. No complaints about quality have been made.



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# Fruits

## Apples

The apple market exhibits stability, alleviating concerns regarding a potential shortage—after all, it is widely acknowledged that an apple-related crisis can significantly disrupt one's day. In the current landscape, the portion sizes offered in food service establishments are remarkably generous, to the extent that one might humorously suggest they could be utilized as building materials for a structure—albeit, such a construction would likely lack optimal living conditions.



Coast blueberries are now accessible as the California season commences. Concurrently, Peruvian offshore fruit is beginning to reach ports following a seasonal transition in cultivation regions.

## Berries—Raspberries

The supply levels from Baja and Central Mexico continue to be limited, contributing to sustained elevated market conditions. Nonetheless, an increase in production is anticipated in the forthcoming weeks as we transition into April.



## Bananas

There is more demand than supplies. Historically Quarter 1 is the most difficult for banana availability.



## Berries—Strawberries

Robust production is emerging from Baja and California in the aftermath of last week's precipitation. Florida has surpassed its peak season; however, it continues to generate substantial daily yields, saturating East Coast markets amidst moderate demand. Central Mexico is anticipated to conclude its season within the forthcoming week or two.



## Berries—Blackberries

Reports indicate that there are supply shortages due to the Mexico product being detained for USDA inspections at the border. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that overall production will enhance in the forthcoming weeks with the commencement of the California season in early April.



## Citrus—Grapefruit

Ruby Reds are currently in stock, with optimal sizes at 56ct and smaller, and are being dispatched from Riverside and the San Joaquin Valley.



## Berries—Blueberries

The markets have exhibited notable strengthening, particularly favoring Central Mexican products due to their superior quality of fruit. Limited quantities of West



## Citrus—Lemons

This week, market conditions are



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strengthening as precipitation contributes to the growth of fruit size. There is a noticeable contraction in the availability of 140ct and smaller sizes. The primary areas, District 1 (San Joaquin Valley) and District 2 (Ventura County/Oxnard), are currently experiencing peak levels for sizes 115ct and larger.

### *Citrus—Limes*

The market is experiencing a modest increase, characterized by limited availability of larger fruit (110/150ct) and optimal volumes of smaller fruit (230/250ct). Anticipate dynamic market activity throughout the upcoming month. Reliable quotations for offshore Colombian fruit could potentially mitigate the risk of price escalations akin to those experienced in the previous year.



### *Citrus—Oranges*

The peak sizes have transitioned to 72ct and 88ct, while opportunities for deals on smaller sizes remain accessible. Nevertheless, the markets are experiencing a fortification as a result of constrained harvesting attributed to rainfall. The Brix levels are approximately 13, indicating a robust year for the foodservice sector. Valencia oranges are anticipated to become available by late May or early June.



### *Grapes*

The grape market currently finds itself in a challenging situation characterized by an oversupply that exceeds demand, reminiscent of the frequent



occurrence when a relative presents their "renowned" fruit salad at every family event. The quality of the grapes exhibits considerable variation; certain specimens appear flawless, whereas others seem to have endured significant challenges. The current pricing is remarkably low, potentially leading one to consider the pursuit of a career in the competitive arena of grape stomping.

### *Melons - Cantaloupe*

The pricing of cantaloupe has reached a state of stabilization and is beginning to exhibit signs of softening. The arrival of the spring crop, representing the third rotation from Guatemala, coincides perfectly with the Easter season. It is anticipated that retail contracts will commence at the conclusion of March, leading to a heightened demand, prompting suppliers to make necessary preparations. The product is exhibiting optimal performance on larger fruit.



### *Melons - Honeydew*

The availability of honeydew supplies has seen significant improvement and is now accessible at all ports located in California, Texas, Florida, and the Northeastern region of the United States. Nogales honeydews originating from Mexico are currently accessible, with the market reaching its zenith for larger sizes.



### *Melons - Watermelon*

The demand for watermelon continues to be modest, while the supply levels re-



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main consistent. The pricing is anticipated to remain stable this week, accompanied by improved availability for larger sizes. Domestic watermelons are projected to be available starting in June.

### *Pears*



Pears are currently experiencing a significant shortage, akin to the constriction felt in a pair of jeans following a Thanksgiving meal. Anticipate limited relief until mid-July, at which point California's fresh Bartlett pears will become available. The agricultural output in Washington experienced a significant decline, with reductions ranging from 25% to 50%, particularly affecting the Bosc variety, which suffered the most severe losses. If you were anticipating a plethora, you might as well be on the lookout for a mythical creature. Anjou represents the primary variety; therefore, if you are considering procurement, it is advisable to act promptly—prices are projected to increase.

### *Pineapple*

*Alert*



The supply of pineapples is anticipated to remain constrained until mid-April, with the highest volumes projected for May. In the forthcoming 3-4 weeks, it will be essential to exhibit size flexibility in order to effectively manage the dynamics of supply and demand. The primary source of pineapples in Costa Rica is derived from contracted business arrangements, which take precedence. The demand for large crownless pineapples is currently significant, and forecasts indicate that rainfall

will likely diminish yields until mid-April. This situation is expected to affect both availability and pricing in the near term.

### *Stone Fruit*



California kiwi continue to arrive, and now imported varieties are also becoming part of the selection. In the meantime, peaches, plums, and nectarines imported from overseas are gradually making their way onto both coasts, reminiscent of budget travelers. Given the moderate supplies coupled with light demand, it is anticipated that this market will maintain a state of tranquility akin to a cat basking in a sunbeam throughout the remainder of the month and into April.



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# Vegetables

## *Asparagus*

The availability of asparagus is becoming increasingly constrained on both coasts, influenced by unpredictable weather patterns in Caborca that are affecting production levels. Suppliers are expected to exert efforts to satisfy the demand during the Easter holiday period. San Luis Rio Colorado is poised to mitigate the downturn experienced by Caborca. In the interim, Peru is initiating operations in late March and early April, serving as a contingency for Mexico should weather or supply challenges impede the Easter loading timeframe.



*Alert*

## *Avocados*

The markets continue to exhibit elevated levels, showing no indications of a forthcoming decline in the near future. The size structure continues to exhibit consistency, with a peak observed in the 60ct and smaller categories, while the 48ct and larger sizes are assigned higher price points. The agricultural season in California is gaining momentum; however, this week anticipates a constrained harvest as a result of rainfall. The predominant sizes observed in California are 48 count and 60 count. The persistence of elevated markets is anticipated to endure until there is an enhancement in supply from Mexico.



*Alert*

## *Bell Peppers*

This Farms in South Florida consistently maintain robust and reliable supplies of bell peppers.



Emerging fields are currently in development, predominantly producing larger varieties, whereas established fields are offering a greater selection and sun-ripened produce. The XL sizing, favored in retail, is currently somewhat limited this week; however, it is anticipated to become more accessible as farms progress further into the new fields. The quality has been commendable, particularly regarding the more recent fruit offerings. South Florida is projected to continue as the primary hub of production for an additional 3-4 weeks, with expectations for Plant City bells to commence in mid to late April as the transition to northern regions begins. This week, the pepper production in Sinaloa is exhibiting a slight increase in strength, characterized by moderate volumes in the Western region. Currently, all sizing options are accessible; however, we anticipate a downward trend in sizes in the coming weeks as growers begin to experience the seasonal decline. The quality has exhibited variability, showcasing commendable fruit from certain sources while others have encountered difficulties. Improvements in overall quality are anticipated within the next 10 to 14 days as new plantings become operational.

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## *Broccoli*

The supply and quality of broccoli continue to demonstrate resilience across all regions, with market conditions anticipated to remain stable throughout the week.



cellos, jumbos, and babies, with projections indicating that shipments will persist through the month of May. Please be reminded to submit your snack pack orders at least 48 hours in advance.

## *Broccolini*

The levels of supply and demand are relatively low this week. The anticipated pricing from Yuma is projected to rise due to constrained supplies.



## *Cauliflower*

The availability of cauliflower is currently somewhat constrained; however, the overall quality remains satisfactory. Nonetheless, there are reports of sporadic instances of off-color heads. Anticipate the market to maintain stability, with prices trending towards the upper range as we approach the weekend.



## *Brussel Sprouts*

The enhancement in supply and quality has been notable, accompanied by a robust demand. The pricing within the market has experienced a decline. Mexico's supplies are currently accessible, and market conditions are anticipated to stabilize over the forthcoming weeks due to enhanced availability and pricing.



## *Celery*

The market remains stable, characterized by minimal production activity in Yuma throughout the week. A number of shipping companies are implementing an additional fee for loads destined for Yuma, as products are being relocated from Oxnard. This is relevant for both open market and contract orders. The Oxnard/Santa Maria regions continue to offer the most favorable availability and pricing, accompanied by a commendable level of quality from the majority of suppliers.



## *Cabbage*

The market is experiencing positive developments, characterized by enhanced yields and quality from Oxnard and Yuma, alongside a consistent supply.



## *Carrots*

The harvesting activities in the Imperial Valley are set to increase progressively in the upcoming week, and the forecast appears to be optimistic. Lake Park, GA is currently engaged in the distribution of various sizes, including chunks,



## *Cilantro*

The supplies are within the allocated budget and exhibit a commendable level of quality. The current demand levels are characterized as moderate, while supplies are being dispatched from Oxnard and Yuma. The availability of supply is anticipated to be con-



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strained over the forthcoming weeks, accompanied by heightened market pricing.

### *Corn*

The pricing remains stable. In summary, the supplies and quality are satisfactory. Mexico is beginning to enter a phase of gradual conclusion. Market dynamics may experience an increase in pricing until the commencement of activities in California in early April.



### *Cucumber*

Honduras The initial harvest of cucumbers from Florida has commenced modestly, and the quality appears to be quite favorable. In the forthcoming 7-10 days, we anticipate the introduction of additional fields, which will contribute to an increase in domestic supply. The import program in Honduras is nearing its conclusion, characterized by modest volumes, and is anticipated to be completed within the next 10 to 14 days. The production levels in the Sinaloa and Sonora regions of Mexico have shown improvement compared to the previous week and are currently categorized as moderate. The quality has remained consistently high and robust across both areas. Anticipate a rise in volume in the upcoming week, as the warmer weather is likely to enhance production levels.



### *Green Beans*

This week, the availability of Florida green beans is somewhat limited, influenced by robust demand as well as reduced yields resulting from previous



weather conditions in the Immokalee, Homestead, and Lake regions. Producers are effectively managing their harvests, resulting in a commendable overall quality. The supply of green beans from Mexico is currently limited, largely as a result of earlier cool temperatures that have hindered the maturation process. The present quality is deemed acceptable; however, there are observable instances of slight immaturity, as well as issues related to shape and russeting. Anticipate an increase in supply and an enhancement in quality over the forthcoming week, as elevated temperatures facilitate the maturation of the fruit currently present on the plants.

### *Eggplant*

This week, the production of eggplants in Florida remains notably limited. Plant City is anticipated to commence operations in mid to late April; however, we foresee a decrease in overall volume due to a reduction in Spring acreage in other regions. In the western region, Sinaloa producers are delivering moderate to substantial quantities of eggplant, and the quality is commendable. We anticipate maintaining steady volumes as we near the Lent season; however, heightened demand may influence availability. Anticipating the future, it is expected that Coachella will commence operations in May.

*Alert*



### *Garlic*

The quality of garlic is exceptional, and it is anticipated that supplies will remain robust in the upcoming weeks.



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## Green Onions



The availability of green onions is currently abundant, characterized by high quality, and this trend is anticipated to persist into the following week.

## Kale



The availability of kale is projected to be abundant and of high quality this week, with similar expectations for the following week.

## Lettuce—Iceberg

*Alert*



The markets are expected to remain active throughout the week, characterized by a demand that surpasses the available supply. Production in Huron is anticipated for the upcoming week, and initial light supplies have commenced in Oxnard. Yuma is expected to exhibit a moderate to light level of availability throughout the week. The anticipated weights and quality are projected to stay at a level that exceeds the average among the majority of shippers.

## Lettuce—Leaf

*Alert*



The markets are currently exhibiting significant activity for romaine, butter, and both green and red leaf varieties, with a notable increase in overall demand throughout the industry. Anticipations for the week indicate a robust performance in the markets, coupled with a heightened demand for romaine hearts. Currently, fringe and tip burn have been minimal; however, this situation may alter next week as Yuma is

expected to encounter elevated temperatures in the growing regions throughout the remainder of the week.

## Lettuce—Tender Leaf



The supply remains consistent, characterized by enhanced quality and robust demand. Increased temperatures are anticipated to facilitate the availability of supplies.

## Mushrooms



The quality is satisfactory, and a majority of growers have made advancements in addressing their supply challenges. No price increases are anticipated. The impact on end users may be diminished through the integration of white and brown.

## Onions



The quality remains consistently high across all cultivation areas, accompanied by a stable demand. The market prices for yellow and red varieties are currently stable, whereas the white varieties are experiencing heightened activity and are anticipated to rise further, potentially extending into February. The supply of white wines is becoming increasingly limited, with red wines also showing signs of a similar trend. Mexico is acquiring a significant quantity of white and red wines. The volume of freight is starting to rise.

## Mini Sweet Peppers



The mini sweet production figures in Sinaloa and Sonora are begin-

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ning to show a downward trend, although current output remains at moderate levels for the moment. The season is anticipated to extend until late April or early May, contingent upon favorable weather conditions. Subsequently, Baja, southern California, and Canada will converge to furnish the necessary supply. The quality remains satisfactory, provided that the fruit is fresh and the integrity of the cold chain has been preserved.

### *Peppers Chiles*

South Florida features a diverse array of chili varieties, albeit in limited quantities. The cultivation of these crops is expected to continue until mid-April, coinciding with the anticipated operational commencement of Plant City. This week in Mexico, there are observed moderate volumes of jalapenos and poblanos. Serranos, tomatillos, and Anaheims are currently accessible; however, the availability of these items is somewhat limited at this time. The overall quality is satisfactory, with the exception of tomatillos, which are currently deemed to be of fair quality.



### *Potatoes*

The pricing in the Idaho market remains stable, characterized by high quality. The yields have experienced a modest decline compared to the previous year. Notwithstanding the reduction, it is anticipated that Idaho will maintain a substantial availability.



### *Squash-Yellow & Zucchini*



This week, farms in South Florida are presenting a robust supply of zucchini, accompanied by comparatively lower quantities of yellow squash. Weather events have significantly impacted the yellow squash, leading to a reduction in the yields of high-quality fruit. Anticipate that volumes will maintain a consistent level in the near future. The quality of zucchini is commendable, while that of yellow squash is moderate, exhibiting some typical issues related to scarring and scuffing. Plant City is poised to commence operations in approximately two weeks. The production landscape in the western regions is currently undergoing a significant transition, shifting from the Sinaloa to the Sonora areas. The Sinaloa region is expected to extend its activities into late April and early May, contingent upon the quality of the produce and market conditions. Meanwhile, agricultural operations in the Obregon area have already commenced. In the Eastern region, the volumes of zucchini are more substantial compared to yellow varieties; however, the quality remains commendable for both types.

### *Hard Squash*

Butternut and spaghetti quantities are decreasing in Honduras, which supplies eastern hard squash. Butternut is good but pasta is fair. Butternut squash is still the most scarce kind in the West. The most abundant acorn is spaghetti. Spaghetti quality is fair, with scarring and aging issues. Sinaloa is currently the main producer, while Sonora will start new plantings by the second week of April.



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