



PRODUCE NEWS

“Where Your Patronage Is Never Taken For Granted!”

Welcome back California!

I think we should give April a big pat on the back for a job well done. There was just enough rain to give us something to gripe about, but not enough to set our crops back. As we write this update our reservoirs in California are nearing full. At last check, Shasta was 10-12 ft. from the top, with still twice as much water coming in as going out.

I wish there was a way to directly inject the extra run off into our underground reserves. I don't think we have all the info yet but we heard that water allotments from the feds this year in California will be 5 %. Last year they received nothing. That makes for interesting math - either that's a 500 % improvement or 95% less than what they would have normally received. Whatever it is, it's better.

There's a lot going on in May. First off we have May Day – a European thing, North American thing, labor thing or spring thing, take your pick. Other special days of May are Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day and Victoria Day in Canada.

Congratulations to a great crew for passing another G.F.S.I. audit. What it boils down to is a full time job for three just to keep the paper work in shape. An additional three to do our in-house lab reports and a piece of six more who make up our food safety team. Seems like it's all changing too fast. Six years ago the feds established the Food Safety Modernization Act which is just now law. Part of the scheme design of the new audits is to stay current. The Food Safety Act is a moving target for us; it changes as the world turns. Apparently intentional

contamination of our food supply is on the watch list. So we get updated prerequisites for our audit.

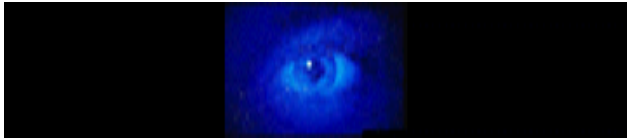
It's an eye opener on the world around us when we have to put extra security on the roof to prevent someone from dropping down through the skylights and putting something on the produce to do harm. We have someone here 24/7, also motion sensors and cameras but not enough. We'll soon have enough cameras to film a 3D movie.

Folks, the bad guys have won. Our government is still missing 252 lbs. of weapons grade Uranium and I need to beef up my security? I did find it a little odd the questions being asked of me by our insurance broker. Over 50 years our two families have been doing business. We bid out to some of the same companies we have for years, this year some refused saying produce is just getting too risky! Wow! The questions from the bidding companies have taken on a new look as well. Do you have a bio-terrorism risk assessment? Do you have 24/7 security? Back ground checks? Food safety, which was just gaining momentum on the insurance forms, is being bested by the international threat. The bad guys have won. Hell between all the sensors, cameras, card lock doors, I can't get into the damn place. Maybe that ain't such a bad thing.

Steve Del Masso
President



Mike's *EYE* On The MARKET



By every measure, the transition back into the vast and diverse growing regions in California has gone smoothly.

Iceberg Lettuce – “Grown in Salinas” will be the moniker attached to every case of Iceberg Lettuce we receive for the next 6 months. We become spoiled with the quality and freshness that we will enjoy.

Romaine, Red, Green & Butter Lettuce – All Leaf Lettuce is also out of Salinas. Quality is fair to good after the erratic weather of the past few weeks. Quality will continue to improve as will pricing; which is only fair, as well.

Red & Green Cabbage – stable pricing and excellent quality. Product is currently from Santa Maria and soon will come out of Salinas.

Broccoli & Cauliflower – are arriving freshly cut from nearby Salinas. Quality and pricing is spot on where it should be.



Carrots – The 2016 Bakersfield Carrot harvest is up and running. Quality is good and pricing is stable.

Celery – fell back down into the fair category. Wholesalers are saying that Celery quality will immediately bounce back up when it's being “Grown in Salinas”. That event should come to pass around the first week of June.

Root Vegetables – Gold Beets and Parsnips are coming down from the NW. Red Beets, Turnips, Rutabagas and Radishes are coming up from SoCal. Pricing is stable and quality is sound.

Artichokes – We see more and more Chokes arrive to the markets. Pricing is wholly dependent on the supply that day. As the spring harvest comes on stronger, pricing will improve. Where you are able, please give us a couple of days' notice to source any Artichoke needs you will have.



White & Yellow Corn – The transition back into California has been made and the fresh Corn we are receiving from Brawley is very nice.

Green Onions – We will be into Mexico Green Onions a while longer. At some point between the end of the month and June we should see CA Grown product on the market.

Red, Yellow & White Onions – Inventory levels of Onions from the 2015 Northwest season are almost to zero. Brawley grown Onions are expected to be here any day now. Hopefully we will see a marked increase in quality without an increase in price.

Sweet Onions – 1015 Texas Super Sweet Onions have elbowed out their competition from Mexico. They are a good value and sweet!

Russet Potatoes – Prices remain steady for now but they could take off at any point. All we can do is wait and see how the plot unfolds.

Potatoes of Color – A smooth transition into Bakersfield potatoes has been made and quality is very nice. Prices and quality are comparable to the best from the North West.

Fingerling Potatoes – Several colors of Fingerlings continue to be available from the bountiful 2015 Klamath Valley/Oregon crop.

Yams & Sweet Potatoes – Prices and quality remain consistent.



Stone Fruit – The 2016 season is out of the starting blocks but in a restrained trot. It's a bit early to expect the lusciously sweet and juicy flavors that are hallmark qualities of California Stone Fruit. Apricots will be the first Stone Fruit to fill the bill. Then after that a whole host of Nectarines, Peaches and Plums will follow. The Cherry season has started but they are very expensive to start the season.

Apples & Pears – Prices keep pushing up as stark inventory levels diminish even more. Imported product will be available but cost even more.

Gold Pineapples – Costa Rica Pineapple growers have shared with us that export levels will be limited for the next 4-6 weeks. Prices have increased slightly and should hang around up there until supply levels improve.



Mangos – In retrospect, the doom and gloom and shortages were not as dire as was imparted to us. Supply and prices are quickly approaching normal levels.

Papayas – Mexico Papayas continue to be high in quality and reasonable in price. Hawaii output is improving and yet prices stepped up a couple of notches.

Strawberries & Stemberries – The amount of rain that we have received this year is a blessing in so many ways and yet it's not for Strawberry growers. With that said, the Strawberry market will be extremely tight through Mother's Day and prices will be much higher than normal. After we get past the busiest day of the year for the restaurant industry and the weather cooperates, prices will begin to subside.

Blueberries & Blackberries – The plan is to be into California grown Blueberries within a week or sooner! With the ample rains we received it should be a stout crop. Blackberries of high quality continue to arrive from Mexico. The switch to domestically grown is still a few weeks away.

Raspberries – The season is shaping up to be a good one. Oxnard will be our go to source and then Salinas.

Happy Mother's Day!



Round & Roma TOMATOES –

Roma Tomato costs did not increase to the heights they expected to reach. While pricing remains firm they are still a reasonable buy.

Round Tomato prices are in for an unsteady spell. Prices are fluctuating so much from week to week that it's difficult getting a handle on what to expect next. I am looking at Tomatoes from both Florida and Mexico before placing an order for the best of the best. The uncertainty will continue for the remainder of the month.



SQUASH – The Southern California and Santa Maria Squash will begin the first week of this month. Quality is suggested to be in the good category. Product from Mexico is still good.

EGGPLANT – Fresh California grown Eggplant is now available. Coachella is first up with product and then soon after, the Fresno growing area kicks in and will be the supply juggernaut for everyone.

BLUE LAKE GREEN BEANS – are now being supplied to us from Coachella. For a short spell it will be Fresno and then locally grown Brentwood area will begin about the first part of June.



Red, Yellow, Orange, & Green Bell Peppers – We are now into California grown Green Bell Peppers. Within a week or two Yellow and Red Bell Peppers will also be California sourced.

CUKES – For the entire month of May we will be sourcing all of our Cucumbers from Baja.



MELONS – We are getting melons from Mexico for the time-being and will soon see SoCal Cantaloupe; about two weeks away.

Seasonal Trends by DIRK

Cello-Pack, Spring Mix & Baby Leaf –

The heat spell that visited Salinas a couple weeks back was not kind to some of the more tender components that make up Spring Mix. With a couple weeks of normal heat levels, Spring Mix quality will bounce right back. Baby Spinach and Arugula made it through unscathed and quality is very good.

ASPARAGUS – California grown Grass supply is limited and there are no other areas able to help out. Demand is high as well as prices.

Varietal Tomatoes (small) – We will be tapping into Mexico for our Varietal Tomato needs for a few more weeks. The yellow varieties (Round, Grape and Pear) continue to be limited and expensive.

Heirloom/Kumato Tomatoes –

Kumato Tomato shipments have improved which in turn is tamping down prices. Regular size Heirloom Tomatoes are available from Mexico but I am not overly enthused by the average flavor profile.

Wild Mushrooms – The rains and warm weather have been great stimulus for Wild Mushrooms. Available on a limited basis: Maitake, Woodear, Hedge Hog, Morel and Porcini.

Japanese/Italian/Chinese Eggplant –

The best value of the three varietal Eggplants is the Chinese variety. Quality is very good and is sensibly priced. The big growers are saying it will be another 4 weeks before the Fresno area is picking Eggplant.



Cutting Edge

O-rganics®

..... solely about organically grown produce.

O-Root news – The supply of O-Roots has improved over last month and I am now running across the occasional excellent buy. Please give some lead-time for all special requests.

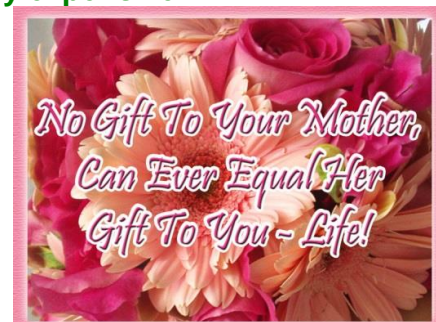
O-Butternut news – Only good news on the horizon is there may arrive a spring harvest by month's end but most likely not until mid-June.

O-Broccoli and O-Cauliflower – These two items are a Local highlight item for the month of May coming to us from our good friends at Lakeside Organics. The transition back into Watsonville/Salinas area has been made and both items are readily obtainable.

O-Celery costs have jumped up! There just isn't enough around to quell prices.

Yellow and Red O-Bell Peppers – Current supply is decent but I am sure looking forward to the California season starting.

O-Jalapenos are now available from Mexico and very expensive.



Nap Thyme

Nap Galvezzzzzzzzzzz

HERBS – Basil is the only herb still hanging out in Mexico for a couple more weeks. We are getting all our others Herbs from California.



Romaine Hearts – Romaine Hearts are back in Salinas and all is good. Prices have eased off. Quality and color have noticeably improved.

ORANGES – The transition from the winter to Spring/Summer Orange seasons is almost complete. We are now into the Late Lane Orange varieties and Valencia Oranges. Texas Juicers are done.

LEMONS – The Eureka Lemon season is now fully into the Fresno/L1 growing region. All sizes of Lemons are looking beautiful.

LIMES – Prices are up. It may be a couple of weeks before prices start to ease back down. Cold and wet weather created average quality Limes. Skin color *IS NOT* a deep consistent green.



Ruby Grapefruit – The California Grapefruit season is underway and we made the switch to local grown. The Star Ruby variety is not as deep red as the Texas fruit but it is still very appealing.

GRAPES – Mexico growers are prepping for their first picks and shipments north. We should expect shipments from Coachella to start overlapping after two to three weeks.

WATERMELONS – Around the middle of the month the SoCal desert growing area will start offering up fresh picked Watermelons. If they are up to snuff with flavor and ripeness I will pull the plug on Mexico and opt for domestically grown.

SNAP PEAS – are almost back home in Salinas. With lower freight charges the final cost per pound will decrease.

HARD SHELL SQUASH – Not much has changed. Non-organic Hard Shell Squash is plentiful. The usual suspects are available; Kabocha, Acorn and Butternut.

Chili Peppers – Mexico grown Chili Peppers are still head and shoulders in quality above California grown. When the pendulum swings the other way I will be tapping domestic sources.

AVOCADOS – Oil content, texture and buttery flavor is fantastic. You can't find a better Avocado anywhere in the world.

JEFF'S TRIVIA QUEST



Why is Cinco de Mayo - a holiday commemorating a Mexican Victory over the French at Puebla in 1862 - so widely celebrated in California and across the United States, when it is scarcely observed in Mexico? Created by Latinos in California during the mid-nineteenth century, it embodied immigrant nostalgia in the 1930's, US patriotism during World War II, Chicano power in the 1960's and 1970's and commercial intentions in the 1980's and 1990's. Today it continues to reflect the aspirations of a community that is engaged, empowered and expanding. So let's celebrate and get to the trivia!

- 1) The spicy dish "chili con carne" is believed to have its origins in Mexico. So which state has passed legislation declaring it a "State Dish"?
 - A) Durango (Mexico)
 - B) Veracruz (Mexico)
 - C) Texas (USA)
- 2) What is the name of a popular Mexican Breakfast dish consisting mainly of Corn tortilla chips?
 - A) Enfrijoladas
 - B) Sopapillas
 - C) Chilaquiles

Fax or email me with the answers and win a great prize. Jeff@baycitiesproduce.com

TRIVIA WINNERS



The answer to last month's trivia was D) Belgian Waffles

On the Titanic

First class passengers could also have herring, salmon, three kinds of Potatoes and Buckwheat cakes for breakfast but not Belgian Waffles which in Belgium are apparently not eaten for breakfast anyway but rather for lunch or a snack. Not only was "Quaker Oats" served on the ship but the company's director Walter Douglas was among the first class passengers. A very popular item on the breakfast menu was cornbread, eaten in great quantity by the American passengers. The ship's bakers had already started making the next day's cornbread when the iceberg struck the vessel's hull.

Congratulations to our winners:

Patti @ Marina Liquor & Deli, Salina @ The Danielsen Co., Scott @ Washington Hospital, Martha @ Executive Inns, Liz @ Strizzi's Restaurant Admin Office, Cheryl @ I hop Hayward, Eva @ Millie's Kitchen, Jenifer @ Miraglia Catering, Chandra @ Garfield NBC, Ann @ Rick and Ann's Restaurant, Mario @ SCC Prob Dept./James Boys Ranch and Grady @ Coffee Time.

May Celebrity Birthdays

Dwayne Johnson	2 nd	44	(Actor)
Janet Jackson	16 th	50	(Pop Singer)
Tina Fey	18 th	46	(Actress)
Cher	20 th	70	(Pop Singer)
Clint Eastwood	31 th	86	(Actor)

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