

Produce Report



Organically Grown
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Promoting Health through Organic Agriculture as a Leading Sustainable Organization

September 21, 2015

What to look for that is NEW and EXCITING Mid-September can often be a time of plenty in the world of fresh produce as two seasons meet; the potential overlap, depending on perspective, creates a merchandising quandary or, conversely, an opportunity. While much of our NW stone fruit supply continues to ebb out slowly, there's still quite the steady supply of melons, particularly cantaloupe. There's also a fair amount of traditionally summer veg still out there in NW fields, including an abundance of green beans. On the flip side, there are plenty of opportunities to promote a dazzling array of apples and pears this week and for the next several months; there are also almost a dozen varieties of winter squash at our disposal. Given the cool week we've had, the chatter has been around a renewed interest in cooking, which would mean a shift toward fall sets. The middle way would be to allow for a combination of supply, quality and weather to dictate what gets featured and ideally there's room somewhere in the hearts of the eaters for all of this abundance. For growers, a strong finish to a crop can be vital to a successful season, and in mid-September, one never can tell if summer-like weather will make another cameo.

Apples There are solid supplies in house on many of the key varieties along with a rotating handful of heirlooms and other unique offerings to keep department sets in showcase mode. With the delayed harvest of Pink Lady, the only remaining imports are Braeburn, Cripps Pink and a few Fuji. Fuji from Washington are also on. Gala sizing remains small and looks to be that way throughout the season. Other steady varieties include Granny Smith, Honeycrisp and Cox Orange Pippin among others. New this week, we'll see the first Jonagold, a few Sommerfeld and possibly some Roxbury Russet.

Berries Blueberries may be winding down for real this time, with probably another week or so left in our NW supply pipeline. Beyond that, there may be a small deal coming out of the California coastal region before imported fruit from South America starts up in October. Strawberries and raspberries remain steady, but the market has been inching up in recent weeks, as is the seasonal norm for this time of year.

Citrus A few promotional opportunities on Valencia have been hitting the market here and there, primarily on larger-sized fruit and/or choice grade. Look for that to continue this week, with aggressive ad pricing potentially available. Grapefruit continues to tighten up; Marsh Ruby was unavailable this week, and Star Ruby volume was light. Expect intermittent supply challenges here. Lemons are shaping up some, just in time for the neighborhood kids to shut down those lemonade stands. Pricing is still very high, although relief is on the horizon. Limes are steady.

Fall fruit Figs, primarily coming out of the northern Sacramento Valley at this point, in Corning, are really starting to wind down. What remains are lighter than expected

volumes of Black Mission and Brown Turkey, a few Candy Stripe and a very small volume of Adriatic. Look for the season to continue, however, as the Southern Coachella region will be back on shortly to fill the void. Volume there will not be as significant as what we've seen over the last several weeks. Pomegranates have hit their stride, with multiple sizes now available and the popular Wonderful series of varieties underway (currently Early Wonderful). Kiwi Berries have come to an end, with only a few trickles available from here on out. Thank you for your support!

Grapes Jupiter grapes are winding down. Based on increased demand this season, they will be back for another round next year. A smaller volume of another local grape, Alborz, has started up to help fill some of the void. Beyond that, fall grapes tend to have some of the best flavor of the season; there remains plenty to choose from, with black, red and green seedless varieties all steady and promotable along with the smaller volume Concord deal which should last another ten days or so. That said, pricing will start to inch up as we move deeper into the fall.

Melons Melons continue to roll, albeit slowly, despite the somewhat cooler fall weather. Cantaloupe is the strongest, with consistent volume out of both the NW and California at least thru the weekend. Here in the NW, we're also seeing some reasonable consistency on Piel de Sapo, Canary, Charentais, Galia and Honeydew. Watermelon is finished up, both bins and minis, with minis gapping until Mexico starts up in October, which will be our next watermelon option.

Pears At the moment, pears are one of the strongest categories in the department. Asian pears in particular are strong, with 20th Century, Hosui and Ichiban. Olympic is up next. Beyond that, if you're looking for the green, red, brown or somewhere in between, there are pears available to meet those needs. Bosc, Bartlett, Star Krimson, Concorde, D'Anjou, Red D'Anjou, Orca and Seckel are all available in various amounts. If there's a particular variety that you want to "go big" on, it's best to coordinate that supply with your OGC sales rep, depending on volume needed.

Stone Fruit Nectarines and peaches are winding down very fast, with peaches essentially done and only a trickle of nectarines expected from here on out. Both are likely to be completely done in the next seven days or so. Plums and pluots are hanging on a little longer, with Flavor Fall plums and Flavor Rich/Flavor Jewel pluots all in the house this week to keep things rolling.

Tropical Keitt mangoes continue to be the opportunity here out of the desert region of Southern California. Mexico is all but done, and while the domestic fruit is higher priced, quality is likely the best mango of the year and many customers find it well worth the investment. Pineapple continues to be hit and miss, and papaya is steady. One new item to play with here is a small volume of Dragon Fruit coming to us out of Southern California. Arrivals will be intermittent and small, so coordinate with your OGC sales rep is advisable to secure your supply.

Avocados Mexican supplies remain strong, and the market is reliably steady right now. We'll continue to see supplementation out of both Peru and even California here

and there as the season rolls along. A limited volume of Reed, focused in larger sizes, continue to show up weekly.

Beans/Peas Presumably strong volumes are still on locally this week, but as with any warm weather crop this time of year, production is dependent on the weather. California supply is available as a backup moving forward, at least until Thanksgiving. Snap peas, at least in the interim, are suffering from a slow-down caused by cooling temperatures and rainfall in California.

Broccoli/Cauliflower Broccoli volume is pretty steady out of the Pacific Northwest thru the weekend, but next week could become tight with a short gap anticipated between plantings that may necessitate some supplementary supply out of California late in the week. Orange and white cauliflower are both steady out of California.

Bunched Greens This is a fairly steady category at the moment, with all three major kale varieties leading the way, with supply strong here in the Northwest. Look for additional strong supplies of other bunched favorites including chard, collard and dandelion. Cilantro and Italian parsley are also steady, with curly slightly behind but trickling in. Bunched spinach coming out of Oregon has suffered some insect damage but is nonetheless available and in good supply beyond that and depending upon the tolerance level of your particular customer base.

Carrots Rainbow carrots are tight in both California and the NW this week with some improvement expected next week. Orange bunched carrots are very steady and will remain promotable for the next several weeks.

Cucumbers Abundant supplies are available through this weekend, with supply from both the NW and Mexico in the house to fill all of our needs. Wrapped English cucumbers have tightened up slightly.

Lettuce/Salad This week marks the likely beginning of the end for local lettuce, with one of our major grower partners here in Oregon starting to harvest the last of their plantings. As this happens, we may see a short spike in availability next week, particularly on red leaf, before we turn our lonely eyes to California to fill out the supply chain. That said, it looks if the first two weeks of October are projected to be a major challenge as California may be caught between plantings at the same time demand goes up.

Onions Aside from the start-up of NW shallots, there are no real changes in the world of alliums, with red and yellow supplies very steady. Sweet and white varieties continue to be a part of the mix, along with red and yellow Cipollini.

Peppers The time for pulling out that old hot sauce recipe board has arrived. September hot pepper promotions are available, with NW supply, on multiple varieties. These include Jalapeno, Poblano (more for the roasting or grilling!), Red Fresno, Habanero, Serrano and Anaheim. Green bell peppers are also a great ad item this week and possibly for the next fourteen days. Red bell are also steady. Orange

and yellow will continue to be hit and miss with supply a mix of NW and Mexico in an effort to fill everyone's needs. Sweet mini peppers, available in multiple-sized clamshell packs are a solid promotional item this week.

Potatoes The market on both Russet and colored potatoes is starting to come off, with some good volume out of both Washington and British Columbia. Fingerlings remain steady, with Ruby Crescent, Purple Peruvian and Russian Banana leading the way. Larger-sized purple potatoes are also available, from our friends at Rainshadow Organics outside of Bend, OR. As the weather cools, a strong potato set will no doubt be in order. On the sweet potato (aka yam) front, new crop continues to trickle in on Garnet, Jewel, Japanese and sweets with purple jumping back in the mix this week. The market should start to come off over the next several weeks ahead of the holiday promotional period.

Tomatoes Rain this week will be pushing our local tomato deal, with the likelihood of a supply pinch as a result. We continue to supplement cherry tomatoes out of Northern California, but the clear abundance of a few weeks back no longer the reality. Roma are extremely tight, with quality questionable on what is out there and Mexico next up. Mexican grown slicers will increasingly be a larger part of the mix going forward, with supply expected to be somewhat limited at the outset, as the market adjusts to increased demand.

Roots Bunched red radishes remain steady, with watermelon radish gapping locally but available from California for those who want to keep it rolling. Beets, parsnips and turnips are all available from the NW at this point, with interest in roots likely to be on the rise from here on out. Red bunched beets are very strong, while their golden colored counterparts are expected to gap.

Squash Winter squash is in full swing, while summer squash is waning. None of this is unexpected, and your department shrink report will certainly welcome this shift. There is lots of variety to choose from, including Butternut, Buttercup, Acorn, Kuri, Kabocha, Delicata, Blue Ballet, Spaghetti and Carnival to name a few. The trick is deciphering when to go big on the winter squash set, with climate the key determining factor.

Trivia Question of the week: This fruit is the edible berry of a woody vine. These vines produce a smooth-skinned fruit that is the "no fuzz," "no peel" cousin of the traditional version of this fruit. When harvested, the whole vine is pulled down. The fruit is very high in antioxidants, and is best eaten when it is soft to the touch.

Variety Veg: Brussels sprouts are starting to increase in volume out of California, with more expected over the weekend. A very small local celery deal will be starting next week from Joe Siri, somewhat timely with the California market very high right now. NW eggplant volume is increasing this week, with promotions available for those that want it.