



WEATHER UPDATE

Yuma - Sunny to partly cloudy next week with a very slight chance of rain on Monday. Highs in the 80s and lows in the mid-40s. **Oxnard** - Mostly sunny next week with a very slight chance of rain Sunday. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the 40s. **Mexico (Culiacan)**- Sunny to partly cloudy next week with highs in the 90s and lows in the 50s. **Florida, Southern**— Sunny to partly cloudy next week with 10-20% slight chances of rain on throughout the week. Highs in the 80s and lows in the mid 60s. **Idaho**—Sunny to partly cloudy next week with a chance of precipitation on Wednesday. Highs will be in the lower 40s and lows in the single digits.

TRANSPORTATION

The National Diesel Average has been recorded at \$3.076 up \$0.028 a gal from last week and up \$0.069 gal from last year. NPC continues to monitor and track diesel fuel averages by state as well as reported truckload freight rates on a weekly basis. **Transportation continues to work through its most significant structural changes in years in regards to new laws and regulations stressing available truck volume and controlling drivers. Trucks are in good supply across the country.**

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MARKET ALERT

Bell Peppers
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Celery
Iceberg Lettuce
Limes
Romaine Lettuce
Green & Red Leaf
Strawberries

MARKET OUTLOOK



Apples



As we enter Q1 - the only 2 apples with any concern are the granny smiths and golds. These 2 varieties are still very tight especially on small sizes - 100s and smaller. Good supplies of reds, galas and fu-jis. Demand is solid with prices steady. Internal pressures and flavor has been one of the best years.

Asparagus



Market went down slightly. Plenty of supply out of Mexico with good quality. Production returned closer to the averages for this time of year and weather looks fair to good for the region at this point.

Avocados



Markets are continuing to stay steady, with smaller fruit staying stronger than larger fruit. 70's are currently the tightest size in the curve and the market is the same for 70's and 60's. Supply should stay steady, but we are moving into higher elevations, which has less growers and they are a bit more patient with their picking schedules. #2 fruit is staying fairly clean and those markets are steady on all sizes. Overall Demand is good and at the current price points it is allowing retail to push promotions most weeks.

Bananas



According to our team in the tropics, the issues we have been experiencing are coming to an end. We are expecting good grade, excellent quality, and back to normal supplies!

Berries



BLACKBERRIES- Supplies have been tight. Quality is good with steady pricing. Expect same conditions through March.

BLUEBERRIES- Supplies are improving with steady pricing. Florida blues coming on end of March.

RASPBERRIES- Quality improving out of Mexico. Supplies are steady & improving into March. Pricing steady to higher.

MARKET OUTLOOK



Broccoli



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Supplies are still light this week. Prices will remain escalated, weather is going to be the main factor in higher markets the next few weeks. Growers are reporting quality concerns with mildew & some yellowing on the florets. Starting to transition back to Salinas but will be a challenge with rain expected in the Salinas Valley.

MARKET ALERT

QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Brussels Sprouts



Supplies will be light this week due to cool weather in the desert & Mexico is slowing down production. Growers are reporting fair quality at best and in some instances less than fair. Expect prices to be steady for the next few weeks.

QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Cauliflower



Supplies continue to be extremely short as demand exceeds supply. The market continues to rise as suppliers are battling lower yields. Expect to see escalated prices for the next few weeks. Quality has been reported as only fair at this time. Cauliflower is starting to transition back to Salinas but with the expected rain in the Salinas Valley, it will be a challenge.

MARKET ALERT

QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Cantaloupes



New Guatemalan production is picking up momentum and filling the void as Honduran and Costa Rican production endures a 2-3 week gap. Even with good volume hitting this week pricing has strengthened due to strong retail promotions currently in place. Larger fruit (9s and larger) will be in a short position for at least the next 7-10 days. New arrivals have been showing the best quality of the season with good color externally. Brix levels have been in the 10-14% range.

QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Carrots



Currently harvesting in Bakersfield, demand is very strong with Canada wrapping up production and is driving prices up. Demand is starting to exceed supply. Will start our Imperial Valley harvest in March, depending on yields when we arrive down there the market could continue to adjust upward as this is the most expensive harvest location of the year. We are also seeing minimum wage increasing and have increased our precooling cost charge to growers so these factors will also put upward pressure on prices.

QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Celery



Supplies continue to be tight this week, with the weather as the main factor for the escalated markets. Quality is being reported as only fair at this time. Supplies will be short for the next few weeks. Product is loading out of Oxnard and Yuma AZ.

MARKET ALERT

QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Corn



Steady supply of corn and good quality out of Florida and Mexico.

MARKET OUTLOOK



Cucumbers



Out East cucumber supply is tight as Honduras imports are winding down. Availability will be light in the next few weeks until Florida's spring crops ramp up in the next 2-3 weeks. Quality is good to fair. To the west while cool weather set back production this past week in Mexico, warmer weather is bringing crops on. By the weekend, crossings are expected to pick up with adequate volumes for the next few weeks. Quality is good out of Mexico.

Eggplant



Demand has perked up on eggplant as we've entered the Lent season. Florida's production has been light but we should see a gradual increase over the next 3 weeks as more growers begin new crop harvests. Mexico farms are crossing adequate and steady numbers. Quality is average from both areas, with some occasional problem lots.

Grapes



We are seeing better volumes on the east versus the west. We have seen 50% less volume than normal to date, volumes are down due to some of the early varieties in Chile being pulled out and new varieties planted but production not at full capacity this year. The Chilean volumes have started to increase this week. The overall quality has been good to fair. Greens are tighter than reds and you will see some minor discoloration in the greens. We will keep you posted with any new developments.

Green Beans



The market is still steady this week. Imported haricot verts are down, with moderate supply and demand. Machine-picked product out of Florida is down. Supply and demand are light, with fair quality. Hand-picked product out of Mexico is up, with moderate supply and demand, with a wide range of quality.

Herbs



Herbs continue with a steady market and steady supply. There are a few herbs with weather concerns like basil, dill, and tarragon but all other herbs have good quality.

Honeydews



Increased production on honeydews continues from Guatemala with volumes peaking this week before settling back to normal levels next week. Sizing is leaning more to larger fruit (5s and larger) which is putting a slight premium on the smaller sizes. Honeydew quality has been very good with clean external quality with brix levels in the 11-13% range.

MARKET OUTLOOK

Iceberg



QUALITY



SUPPLY



Supplies remain tight this week. Weather is causing some quality issues on Iceberg, you will find epidermal peel and blistering as the main quality concerns. Demand has increased this week, expect lighter supplies the next few weeks. Expect to see lighter weights on the Whole Case liner lettuce and Cello Lettuce. The transition back to Salinas will be difficult, due to the expected rain in the Salinas Valley.

MARKET ALERT

QUALITY



SUPPLY



Kale



The market continues to come down this week as more supply has come on. Quality is good to fair with full bunches, and only an occasional yellow leaf being reported.

Leaf



QUALITY



SUPPLY



Romaine – Supplies remain tight this week. Quality issues on romaine due to weather, with epidermal peel & blistering as the main concerns. Active market on romaine this week, expect it to remain strong for the next few weeks with less Iceberg & Leaf Lettuce available. **Green Leaf, Red Leaf, & Butter Lettuce**– Supplies remain tight this week. Slightly better demand for Leaf Lettuce this week. Weather is causing the same quality issues with tip burn and epidermal peel. The transition back to Salinas will be difficult, due to the expected rain in the Salinas Valley.

MARKET ALERT

QUALITY



SUPPLY



Tender Leaf



Growers and processors are having challenges with Arugula & Spring Mix currently due to weather and insect challenges. Organic items have been alerted. Orders are being filled when quality meets standards, but we can expect orders cuts for the next 3 to 4 weeks. Product will transition to California at that time and we should see much improvements on order fills rates.

QUALITY



SUPPLY



Lemons & Limes



Lemons- Steady supply on most larger sizes. 165s and smaller will be tight and will get very limited shortly. Current markets are looking steady, normal business on small fruit looks steady for now but could get snug with the upcoming rain. Good quality has been reported.

Limes- Supply is extremely tight due to less inbounds coming from Mexico & rain in the growing regions. Higher demand has caused FOB prices to almost double. Quality is average, scarring is a minor issue.

MARKET ALERT



MARKET OUTLOOK



Onions



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Onions are steady to slightly higher this week. As the Oregon season continues on the seasonal decline of supply we will look to transition south around May. JBOs are steady around \$7+, reds the same, and whites remain in the high \$30s with very limited supply. White onions are alerted. Seeing good quality and demand across the board.

Onions, Green



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Supplies are improving coming out of Mexico, due to better weather. The recent cool weather is causing the occasional leaf minor and mechanical damage. Market is showing signs of improvement and more green onions available

Oranges



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Steady supply of navels available on 72ct & smaller. Supplies are tight on 56ct & larger which will most likely remain for the rest of the season. Quality has been reported good. Flavor is also good and will get better as we get further into the season. Sugar levels vary from 11 to 12 Brix. Oranges out of Florida & Texas are also available.

Pears



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Pears are in good supply. Barts should go through February - Bosc should go through April. Red Anjou should go through June while Anjou through July -first part of August, just in time for new crop Barts.

Peppers, Bell



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Prices have increased this week on all bell peppers. Supplies are tight out east and west, especially on color peppers. Older fields in Florida have played out, leaving mostly new Spring crops for this week's production. Current sizing is about 60% jumbo and 2XL, not leaving much available for the retailer preferred XL and smaller fruit. New crop quality is excellent with nice color and strong walls. Look for some volume improvement over the next few weeks as more Spring crops come into play. In Mexico, Sonora growers have joined Sinaloa farms in bell pepper production, but volume and size are slow to come. Look for better yields over the next week with more "normal" production eventually coming in about 3 weeks.

MARKET ALERT

Peppers, Chili



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Demand will increase with the Lent season up us on all hot peppers, especially poblano, anaheim, & tomatillo. The Mexican National Market kicking into high gear from now until Easter, we will see high demand for several weeks. Quality has really improved out of Mexico now that there all more growing regions going. The next 7 days should be good for hot peppers in volume and quality, barring any weather issues. Florida supplies remain light until Plant City is up and running in a month so most of the East will be looking to Mexico to fill demand.

MARKET OUTLOOK



Pineapples



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Conditions in Costa Rica are very dry which has resulted on slightly lower volumes than expected for this time of the year. We do expect situation to improve for within the next couple of weeks. We are preparing for Easter and will have good volumes if customers are interested in promoting.

Potatoes



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Potatoes are up. Most Burbank's are around \$14-15 while norks remain about a dollar down, but in some instances stable with the Burbank's. As we get deeper into storage there is a smaller and smaller supply of big spuds. Expect them to be short and at a premium through summer. The heat is also going to be a factor and some suppliers are already finding a good amount of hollow heart and other quality concerns. Don't expect any relief here for the next 6 months.

Squash



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Spring crops are starting up in southern Florida, quality is much improved on the new crops. Volumes are adequate to meet demand this week. Volumes should remain steady in Florida for the next 2-3 weeks, at which point Plant City will enter the picture as well. Although the Mexican squash scenario has been a bit tough over the past few weeks, warmer weather & new crops in the north are slowly bringing the numbers back. Quality has been good on zucchini and fair on yellow.

Strawberries



QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Oxnard, CA— In an EXTREME situation. More rain hit Oxnard and Santa Maria hard earlier this week. Growers spending more time stripping fields than packing due to all the weather related issues (recent back to back heavy rain events & cooler weather). Pricing steady to higher. Supplies remain tight & distributors must be pre-booking to load anything out of Oxnard. The packing schedules are changing frequently with the weather. Harvesting as weather permits. Forecast not seeing any rain for next 10 days. Oxnard needs to dry out. **Florida**— Pricing moving upwards, as Florida taking on receivers that cannot get loaded out of California or Mexico. Smaller fruit with counts 20-24. Quality looks good & looking for a strong finish to the Florida season in the next 3 weeks. **Mexico**—Most growers finishing up in Mexico. Quality is fair at best.

MARKET ALERT

QUALITY  SUPPLY 

Tomatoes



In Florida the round and roma markets are escalating due to lower winter crop volume, we will not see an increase in volume until the spring crop is ready within the coming weeks. Quality is good to fair. Out west the markets are also escalated on rounds and roma due to increasing demand, cool temperatures, and low availability. Mexico is struggling to keep up with demand and declining volumes in both East and West. The strong market and lower volumes have caused pricing to increase on both rounds and roma tomatoes anywhere from \$2- \$5 a case. Grape and cherry tomato market is steady with good to fair quality out of East & West.



MARKET OUTLOOK

Cabbage

Supplies remain tight this week, due to weather & lower yields. Expect demand to get stronger as St. Patrick's Day approaches. We will see some quality issues due to weather over the next few weeks. With less product available expect higher prices on whole case product and processed cabbage.

Could ultraviolet light replace fungicides on strawberries?

Natalia Peres envisions a day when light from a machine resembling a spacecraft helps prevent powdery mildew from damaging [strawberries](#).

Peres, a professor of plant pathology at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, works with a global group of scientists studying how to use ultraviolet light to suppress plant pathogens, according to a news release. Powdery mildew is one such pathogen.

Peres and researchers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Cornell University — both in New York state — as well as scientists from Norway are pioneering the research, according to the release. ultraviolet lamps are widely used in water purification and microbiological sterilization, but they're not yet commonly used for plant-pathogen suppression, according to a USDA news release announcing the grant for the research last year.

"UV treatments applied once or twice weekly were as effective as the best available fungicides applied on similar schedules for control of strawberry powdery mildew," Peres said in the release. "It's not a one-time fluke. The trials have been repeated successfully for three seasons now."

The new technology has been tested at UF/IFAS Gulf Coast REC strawberry fields and at Wish Farms in Duette, Fla. Similar trials are being conducted across North America and Europe by research collaborators on crops such as grapes, hops and cucumbers, Peres said in the release.

The research has been supported by grants from the USDA Specialty Crops Research Initiative, the USDA Organic Research and Extension Initiative, the Norwegian Research Council and state and regional commodity groups.

<https://www.thepacker.com/article/could-ultraviolet-light-replace-fungicides-strawberries>

If you have any specific questions or concerns on any commodities not mentioned in this report, please feel free to reach out to dforsythe@nproduce.com and we will be happy to give you those current market conditions. Also look for our Spanish version that will be released on Monday and our Midweek Update released every Wednesday. Have a great week!
Keeping You Informed,



Your Dedicated NPC, LLC Staff