



Here is the midweek report from National Produce Consultants about the virtually unprecedented situation with produce. Midwest Fresh will do all it can to procure supplies. Our fill rates on orders are averaging 15% of our normal buys at best! Spot shortages and outs are the normal for the next two weeks until the industry can recover somewhat from the romaine quarantine and transitional growing and weather issues. Most produce commodities will be on a “price daily” scenario.

Avocados - Harvesting in Mexico continues with daily arrival volumes. Revolution Day and Thanksgiving will create additional delays affecting timely fruit crossings at the border. Some border agencies and harvest closed as of Monday, November 19th. The border will be closed half-day, again, this today, November 21st and will be completely closed on Thanksgiving Day, November 22nd. We are doing everything possible to expedite the flow of fruit. Most suppliers are working to fill their distribution centers as fast as possible, moving lugs and volume packed boxes only at this time. Orders will still be prorated over the next week as suppliers work to balance the fruit across the country to be ready to resume regular business with limited ripening available. Pricing will continue this week day to day, order to order, as the market is reestablished. We will continue to provide updates to the market and any purchase orders as we have the information available. Markets are still in a state of flux. Mexico resumed picking on Wed. Nov 14th, but the pipeline was almost empty by this time after a 17-day strike in MX. The fruit is fresh and taking a little longer to ripen though product is in the pipeline. Most fruit this week is hard and green, but we expect ripe product to become more readily available next week. Suppliers and distributors are working hard to refill the pipeline and estimations are that things should be back to normal by the week of the 10th.

Tomatoes - Tomatoes are gapping during this transition time also due to weather over the past couple of months. Supply is tight, pricing is triggered and some suppliers enacting force majeure. The holidays are making the situation even worse with increased demand. Round markets continue to increase out of both Texas and Florida. Mexican supplies are extremely light as most growing areas have had freezing temperatures during this past week. Most growers have lost significant percentages of their crops. Florida supplies are also light as the cold and wet weather has slowed down production.

Broccoli - Broccoli supplies are extremely short this week. The demand is high due to the holidays for Broccoli this week. This has created stronger markets and prices are higher than the prior week.

Cauliflower - Supplies are almost extinct. With production finishing up in Salinas and with the transition from Salinas to Yuma AZ, markets are much higher this week. There is also an increased demand for Cauliflower due to the Holidays. Expect markets to maintain strong for the next few weeks.

*****Most all leaf items are escalated and in shorter supply as the industry reacts to the romaine outbreak.**

This includes but is not limited to, green leaf, red leaf, butter, iceberg, spring mix, spinach, & arugula.***

Lettuce - Iceberg supplies are extremely limited. With the current Romaine situation and other Leaf commodities, Iceberg is a huge demand at this point. Distributors were unable to prepare for the increased ice-berg pull based on the CDC recommendation and some are running dry. Prices are escalated and this is even being substituted in regions across the country until product can make its way through the pipeline to catch up. Prices are expected to stay strong through the Holiday.

Green & Red Leaf - Due to the current Romaine market situation Green Leaf, Red Leaf and Butter Lettuce are in high demand. Expect prices to be higher for the next few weeks and product tight until the pipeline catches up with the increased demand.

Peppers - Although some new crops have started on the eastern side of the state, bell pepper volumes are still light in Florida. Overall acreage is down this season, with some regular producers stepping out of the deal this year. However, we do look for production to strengthen somewhat in a few weeks as a few more major growers come online. In the West, California's product is in short supply. Quality is great; there's just not enough of them. Mexico is ramping up but is still a week away from any kind of significant volume.

Green Beans - Supply remains limited in the West as we wait for more Mainland Mexico growers to crank up for the season. Florida is harvesting full force which should take this down next week back to normal pricing.

Strawberries - Availability is tight out of California due to weather and growing area transitions. This is typical of this time of year. Harvesting in CA has been hampered with rains. Prices are up sharply. The Wild fires are also causing negative impact on the berries and harvesting. Quality across all areas is compromised, end product is bruised and irregular sizing.

We at Midwest Fresh hope this information is valuable to you as we work thru this situation together. A lot will depend on how quickly the CDC can sort out the romaine alert. Please call us at 614-469-1492 for more information. We will continue to update on our and the produce industry across the board.