



ProduceNews

January 12, 2007

Please Distribute to:
 Executive Chef
 General Manager
 Kitchen Manager
 Purchasing Manager
 F&B Manager

TO THE POINT...

A FreshPoint quick glance at the top produce items, their quality, pricing and market conditions.

	Quality			Price		
	H I G H	A V G O	P O O R	H I G H	A V G O	L O W
Asparagus		✓		✓		
Beans			✓	✓		
Broccoli		✓		✓		
Cabbage		✓		✓		
Cauliflower		✓		✓		
Celery		✓		✓		
Cucumbers		✓			✓	
Lettuce – Iceberg			✓	✓		
– Leaf			✓	✓		
– Romaine			✓	✓		
–Spring Mix			✓		✓	
Onions – Red		✓		✓		
Onions – Yellow		✓		✓		
Peppers – Green	✓					✓
Peppers – Red		✓		✓		
Potatoes – Russet	✓					✓
Squash – Yellow		✓		✓		
Squash – Zucchini		✓		✓		
Tomato – Cherry	✓			✓		
– Grape	✓			✓		
– Mature Green		✓		✓		
– Roma		✓		✓		
– Vine-Ripe		✓		✓		
Avocado –Calif.	✓			✓		
– Imports	✓					✓
Berries		✓		✓		
Grapes	✓			✓		
Kiwifruit	✓				✓	
Lemons	✓			✓		
Limes		✓		✓		
Melon–Cantaloupe			✓	✓		
Melon – Honeydew			✓	✓		
Melon– Watermelon		✓		✓		
Oranges	✓			✓		
Pineapple		✓		✓		
Strawberries	✓			✓		

TOP FIVE

5 ITEMS TO TALK ABOUT TODAY

BIG CHILL...Record-breaking cold temperatures are descending on Western growing regions and could have long-term impacts.

ICEBERG...More cold in the desert, and this time, temperatures could dip colder and stay longer.

LEMONS...Lemons have very little sugar, so freezing temperatures will have the greatest impact on Lemons.

ORANGES...About 3/4 of the Navel Orange crop is still hanging in trees in the San Joaquin Valley. A deep, long freeze could cause severe damage.

STRAWBERRIES...It looks like Southern California fields will not escape the coming cold temperatures.

THE BIG CHILL

Mother Nature is turning a cold shoulder to growers in California and Arizona. Temperatures are expected to dip into the upper teens for several days. Some regions could see record low temperatures. This will have impacts on Navel Oranges, Tangerines, Lemons, Strawberries and row crop vegetables like Broccoli, Cauliflower, Celery and Lettuce. It may take several days for growers to assess damage to crops, trees and plants. It may affect tree crops even next year.

BERRIES – STRAWBERRIES

How things change. Production was really hitting a strong stride, but possible record cold temperatures are falling onto plants and fields in Southern California, from Oxnard in the north to San Diego in the south. These coastal growing regions usually escape these types of freezing conditions. It doesn't appear these fields will escape this time. Growers will cut back on picking hours, trying to help fruit color up. Most growers will be overspraying their plants and fruit to help keep temperatures from dropping below freezing. Even so, expect to see severe shortages from California fields. Most of the West Coast will have to look to Mexico for supplies. There may even be some Southern Hemisphere berries flown in to help with the freeze gap. Even though Florida is supplying about 75% of the nation's supply right now, the cold snap in California should lift prices nationwide. A rising tide raises all ships. Florida production is steady, with good quality.

CITRUS – LEMON

Freezing temperatures will affect Lemons more than any other citrus. That's because Lemons have virtually no sugar content. Sugar in citrus acts like anti-freeze. The more sugar, the more cold the fruit can withstand. The less sugar, the less cold fruit can withstand. Fruit in all three growing districts in California will be very susceptible



“FreshPoint, Inc. Produce that's Fresh. Information that's to the Point.”



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to damage. Growers will be in the groves over the weekend for the first assessing of initial damage.

CITRUS - ORANGES

The deep freeze in the San Joaquin Valley, over a period of several days, could cause tremendous damage to fruit still hanging on the trees. In 1990, a Christmas freeze destroyed about 80% of the crop. This year's freeze is several weeks later, which means the fruit has higher sugar content. Sugar acts like anti-freeze in the fruit. So fruit this time of year is able to handle colder temperatures for longer periods, as opposed to fruit that was hanging on the trees just three weeks ago. Expect all orders to be prorated during severe weather like this. Freezing can cause "dry cell" in the fruit, which makes the fruit unmarketable, even for juicing. Hard freezes can also damage the smaller growth twigs on the trees, which is where next year's blossoms and fruit set will occur. If the freeze, indeed, is deep enough, long enough, it will greatly affect next year's crop as well. It will take growers several days to assess damage to fruit and to trees. Earlier cold temperatures in December were not cold enough to cause damage, but were cold enough to increase sugar content, and almost more important, it thickened the rinds on the fruit, which will act as insulation for the fruit during this current freeze. Growers will be using irrigation, wind and smudge pots to help increase orchard

temperatures. With about 75% of the Navel Oranges still hanging on the trees in Tulare County, a deep freeze could prove devastating.

LETTUCE - ICEBERG

Large size heads will demand much higher prices, especially as the Yuma growing region braces for several days of well below average temperatures. Growers are expecting daytime temperatures to barely reach 50 degrees. Night temperatures will dip below freezing. This will slow growth, and because this pattern is expected to last several days, we are expecting to see prolonged freeze damage to crops. This will mean plenty of blistering, epidermal peel, light weights and smaller sizes. Daily delays in harvest schedules and limited labor crews will magnify the limited supplies. Prices will climb quickly. With warmer temperatures in the East, demand has been stronger, and that higher demand will also magnify the higher prices. Deteriorating quality will no doubt also show up in processed product as well. Retail contracts for fresh-cut salads will add even more demand pressure to these very limited supplies.

LETTUCE - LEAF

Same issues as with Iceberg.

LETTUCE - ROMAINE

Same issues as with Iceberg.

LETTUCE - SPRING MIX

Same issues as with Iceberg.

POTATOES - RUSSET

Freezing temperatures could have an impact on spuds from the Northwest. Most of the storage sheds are not in the same location as the packing sheds. This requires open trucks to transport the spuds. Even for a very short time, when those potatoes are exposed to sub-freezing temperatures, that could cause decay several days later, which may not show up until the potatoes are in the hands of the end user. Also, some shippers have been getting calls from Europe for dehydrated flakes. Some Western European countries had damage to their crops, particularly in Great Britain, Belgium, Ireland and Germany. If those orders come in, processors in the Northwest will be looking to the fresh market for supplies. That increased demand could pressure fresh market prices higher.

TOMATOES

We are seeing very good supplies and quality from Florida, on slicers, Romas, Cherry and Grape. We are still not in full production from Mexico, a few weeks later than normal. Most growers in Mexico say they should be in full production by the end of January. Roma supplies from Baja are nearing the end of their season. For Roma supplies in the West, Mexico will become the main supplier by mid-January.

