

La Grasso Bros.

INC.

PRODUCE

Weekly Market Review April 18, 2024

Overview

We will continue to experience shortfalls on several winter veg items out of Mexico and Florida due to the impacts of the La Nina/ El Niño weather pattern. The shortest item this week are hot peppers with jalapeno, tomatillo, shishito and serrano, all the most volatile, as some shippers declared an act of God this week. Drought, a wider transition GAP between winter and spring production, and poor weather throughout the winter has disrupted a typically calm seasonal crop. We will see the dip in tomato production continue across the entire tomato category with rounds being the lightest this week. Some growers are already seeing losses in the newer plantings due to pollination issues and lack of yield resulting from late rains and cooler than normal seasonal average temps. We are hoping to see some improvement in the markets 3-4 weeks from now. In Mexico, the government is scheduled to shut water off to the Sinaloa agriculture community this month making the possibilities of shortages a reality. Overall, the current supply remains at record lows and until we see some consistency in weather, this will only continue to hamper a recovery. Table grapes remain extremely short and hope to see some improvement over the next month. The avocado market has shown strength due to an increase in larger sizes, and this trend is expected to continue for several weeks. Currently, the best deals can be found for 60s & smaller avocados and #2 fruit. Although there are large inventories in the U.S., the impact of Cinco de Mayo celebrations on the market is still uncertain. In response to reduced demand, Mexico has slowed down its harvest, and if Cinco de Mayo festivities prove to be successful, we may see another market increase in early May as the pipeline restocks. California's avocado volume is exceeding their weekly projections, with a harvest of over 11M pounds last week. With Mexico's size curve decreasing, California growers may choose to reserve some orchards for larger sizes and higher returns in early summer, as it is expected that larger sizes will be limited from Mexico and Peru in the upcoming weeks. Smaller sizes are anticipated to dominate the size curve from Mexico and Peru throughout the summer. Market prices are expected to remain high during spring, as the three main avocado-producing countries (Mexico, California, and Peru) have smaller crops compared to last year. In California, transition is complete and all wet veg items will be shipping from the Salinas Valley as supplies and quality continue to increase.

Alert

- Asparagus – **ESCALATED**
- Avocados – **ESCALATED**
- Basil – **ESCALATED**
- Broccoli – **ESCALATED**
- Cabbage, Red - **ESCALATED**
- Carrots – **ESCALATED**
- Cauliflower - **ESCALATED**
- Table Grapes- **EXTREME**
- Hot Peppers (All Varieties)- **EXTREME**
- Limes – **ESCALATED**
- Lettuce, (Iceberg Liner, Ctn Romaine, Ctn Romaine Hearts, VA Iceberg, VA Romaine, VA Iceberg/Romaine Blends) – **ESCALATED**
- Onions – **ESCALATED**
- Onions, Green – **ESCALATED**
- Oranges – **EXTREME ON SMALL SIZES**
- Potatoes – **ESCALATED**
- Snow & Sugar Snap Peas – **ESCALATED**
- Tomatoes- **ESCALATED**
- Watermelon - **ESCALATED**

Watch List

- Artichokes
- Celery
- French Beans
- Ginger
- Lemons, on small sizes
- Lettuce, Green Leaf, Red Leaf and Boston/Butter Lettuce, Better Burger

Weather









SALINAS, CA

Thu 4/18	Fri 4/19	Sat 4/20	Sun 4/21	Mon 4/22	Tue 4/23	Wed 4/24	Thu 4/25
68° 49°F	65° 48°F	68° 49°F	68° 49°F	70° 50°F	63° 49°F	63° 48°F	61° 48°F
Partly Cloudy	AM Clouds/PM	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy









OXNARD, CA

Thu 4/18	Fri 4/19	Sat 4/20	Sun 4/21	Mon 4/22	Tue 4/23	Wed 4/24	Thu 4/25
65° 53°F	61° 53°F	63° 53°F	67° 54°F	65° 55°F	61° 53°F	63° 52°F	62° 51°F
AM Clouds/PM	AM Clouds/PM	AM Fog/PM	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	AM Clouds/PM	AM Clouds/PM	Partly Cloudy









CULIACAN, SINALOA

Thu 4/18	Fri 4/19	Sat 4/20	Sun 4/21	Mon 4/22	Tue 4/23	Wed 4/24	Thu 4/25
101° 59°F	100° 58°F	99° 60°F	100° 60°F	99° 60°F	98° 62°F	98° 63°F	98° 62°F
							
Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy









JALISCO, NAYARIT

Thu 4/18	Fri 4/19	Sat 4/20	Sun 4/21	Mon 4/22	Tue 4/23	Wed 4/24	Thu 4/25
90° 59°F	90° 59°F	88° 60°F	87° 60°F	86° 60°F	87° 59°F	87° 61°F	87° 62°F
							
Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

VIZCAINO, BAJASUR

Thu 4/18	Fri 4/19	Sat 4/20	Sun 4/21	Mon 4/22	Tue 4/23	Wed 4/24	Thu 4/25
93° 55°F	87° 55°F	88° 56°F	90° 57°F	88° 54°F	85° 55°F	83° 55°F	82° 52°F
							
Mostly Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

WIMAUMA, FL

Thu 4/18	Fri 4/19	Sat 4/20	Sun 4/21	Mon 4/22	Tue 4/23	Wed 4/24	Thu 4/25
88° 64°F	90° 64°F	90° 65°F	88° 69°F	86° 65°F	90° 66°F	90° 66°F	90° 66°F
							
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny

Fruits & Vegetables

Avocados:ESCALATED Projections once again call for over 70M pounds to be harvested for the U.S. this week, but it's highly unlikely we'll hit that number. With current on-hand inventory at a high, a modest weekly harvest from Mexico will keep the market tracking at a steady pace. USDA average pricing across all sizes is very similar to last week, but larger fruit and smaller fruit are trading off. 48s and larger saw an increase, while 60s & smaller a decrease. The normal crop continues to mature, with dry matter averaging 34%, ripe cycles are shorter, and fruit is at a peak eating experience. The size curve is starting to shift smaller fruit, and a mix of promotions across all sizes will help keep supply & demand in balance.

Bananas: We are seeing some delays at the ports, but we are not anticipating any supply issues. In some rare cases fruit may be a color stage behind in ripening. Overall fruit is showing great overall Quality.

Pineapples: We are seeing lighter volume and some delays at the ports causing a few shortages. We should see improvement after the Easter Holiday. Quality remains good.

Table Grapes:EXTREME Grape availability remains at record lows on all varieties, and we expect this to continue through the month with elevated pricing on market business. There is more fruit on the water and scheduled to arrive and conditions are expected to slowly improve over the next 3-4 weeks. We do expect firm markets until the Mexican crop begins in approximately 3 weeks. Quality is fair and we are still asking for subs to black grape since they seem to have the best quality and legs over the red and greens.

Berries

Strawberries: Strawberry production is expected to rise soon, with the hope that the adverse weather conditions have passed. The plants are healthy and anticipated to bear considerable fruit in the coming weeks. Some cleanups may be required due to rain damage, but we are optimistic that Santa Maria and Watsonville will experience a significant increase in production. We are seeing some fruit with some misshapen button nose tips, green shoulders, and some pin rot, but crews are doing a good job of keeping packs clean.

Blackberries: Blackberry production continues to be steady, and newer varieties are yielding good numbers, keeping supply steady. Quality is good, with sizing between the medium to large range, a nice sheen, mostly black, and good firmness. Due to high temperatures in the regions, we see some regression in some ranches and softer fruit as the days get hotter.

Raspberries: Supply remains noticeably light, and the market is undersupplied. The weather has been consistently warm and sunny across all areas, occasionally accompanied by strong winds. Daytime temperatures have been in the mid-90s, while nights have been in the low 60s. The forecast for next week indicates that the heat will persist. The fruit appears to be in good condition, displaying a vibrant red color with some lighter shades in the mix due to early picking before the hot weather. The sizes are predominantly medium. Although there are occasional instances of overripe or damaged fruit in the packs, harvest teams are working diligently to ensure they are removed. Volumes will likely struggle over May and June until volumes pick up in northern California.

Blueberries: Northern Florida's acreage has shown significant progress as we approached the weekend, indicating a positive shift that is expected to continue for the next two weeks. Surprisingly, Georgia's harvest yielded impressive numbers as we entered the previous weekend, and this week witnessed a substantial increase in production, surpassing initial estimates. As we approach the final week of April and enter May, we anticipate a substantial yield of high-quality crops. The berries are of medium to large size and boast exceptional quality, size, and flavor. However, it is worth noting that some packs may exhibit attached stems, blush, and occasional scarring.

California Citrus

Oranges: EXTREME ON MEDIUM & SMALL SIZES Small size oranges continue to be in extremely short supply and will remain in short supply for the remainder of the navel season and into the valencia season. In addition, forecasted rain in the orange growing regions in central California will lead to delays in harvesting and trucks getting out timely. Volume on Valencia's is continuing to increase with sizing trending large as well. **FLEXIBILITY ON SIZING AND LOADING AREAS WILL BE MANDATORY IN ORDER TO GET ORDERS FILLED!**

Lemons: WATCHLIST We are seeing a significant size shift on lemons in California. Small fruit is getting exceptionally short with reports that 70-80% of the crop is running 95's/115's/140's with no relief in sight until imports start next month. **FLEXIBILITY ON SIZING AND LOADING AREAS WILL BE MANDATORY IN ORDER TO GET ORDERS FILLED!**

Limes: ESCALATED The market and overall demand is steady. We continue to see increased availability on small sizes from new production harvests with large sizes continuing to be limited in supply. We anticipate a slight increase in demand for Cinco de Mayo, but anticipate market to continue to soften throughout Q2.

Grapefruit: California Grapefruit is being packed in Riverside and the central valley.

Imports/Specialties: Domestic mandarins Pummelo's and Blood Oranges are available in the central valley of California.

West Coast Lettuce

Iceberg: ESCALATED: The crop has transitioned to Salinas, with just a few shippers continuing to ship out of Huron. We are seeing market pricing firming up because of industry planting delays during the rainy season, and late season cooler and wet weather trends, causing lighter yields and quality issues at the field level. Supplies will remain lighter and market strong as we finish out the month.

Romaine, & Romaine Hearts: ESCALATED The crop has transitioned to Salinas and we are seeing with iceberg lettuce, market pricing is firming up because of industry planting delays during the rainy season and late season cooler/wet weather trends. These trends are causing lighter yields mixed with quality issues at the field level. Supplies will remain lighter and market strong as we finish out the month of April.

Green Leaf, Red Leaf & Butter: WATCHLIST All leaf items are now shipping from Northern California and overall production is steady with fair to good quality because of weather-related issues. The market is steady but could trend higher as demand increases.

Eastern and Western Vegetables

Green Bell Pepper: Better supply this week across all sizes and quality is good. The desert is expected to start in May with South Georgia scratching late April.

Color Bell Pepper: Excellent supply and good quality available on all sizes.

Mini Sweet Pepper: Supply will be hit and miss this week loading in Nogales.

Mixed Chili Pepper: EXTREME Record low supplies and higher demand are pushing prices higher across the entire category. Overall, the quality is fair, but we expect to see a large imbalance in supply over the next 4-6 weeks. Once some of the newer growing areas begin production, we hope to see some relief, however in the meantime we will continue to see the potential for shorts and extreme escalation in pricing. In Mexico, the main growing regions in Sinaloa are ending and Cadereyta is not starting until the end of this month. Typically, the Sinaloa season goes on for a few more weeks and we don't see this supply GAP; however, due to weather related issues the GAP is bigger this season. In the east we are seeing the same thing, typically a lot of pepper is available out of Florida this year to offset the transition crops in Mexico, between less acreage being planted and weather we have a lighter supply available for market. We will not see improvement in the east until South Georgia starts Mid-May. Until then markets are going to continue to be firm and see pricing above the \$80 watermark on the shortest varieties (jalapeno and serrano).

Eggplant: Good supply and quality available crossing through McAllen and Nogales. New crop will be available in South Georgia in approximately 4 weeks.

Slicer Cucumbers: Steady supply available out of McAllen, Nogales, and Florida. South Georgia is projected to scratch on new crop at the end of April.

English Cucumbers: Promotable volume crossing from Mexico; markets were firmer this week due to lighter supply of slicer cucumber. Quality is good.

Pickles: Lighter supply available out of Nogales and Quality is good.

Green Beans: Steady supply and good Quality available out of Florida and Mexico this week.

French Beans: **WATCHLIST** Production from Guatemala has improved, but the heat has hurt some production areas. Steady supply and improved quality of French beans out of Mexico.

Zucchini/Yellow Squash: Shipping out of Florida, McAllen, and Nogales with good supply and quality available in general. Best quality continues to be on zucchini while yellow squash, with its tender skin far more vulnerable to imperfections, seems to remain very light in supply. South Georgia is about 2 weeks from scratching.

Herbs

Basil quality continues to improve each week. We are still seeing some quality issues with dill. Rain continues to affect supply and quality. Chervil production has improved.

HERB	SUPPLY	QUALITY	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
Arugula	Steady	Marginal	USA
Basil	Steady	Steady	USA/MEX
Opal Basil	Steady	Steady	USA
Thai Basil	Steady	Steady	USA/MEX
Bay Leaves	Steady	Steady	USA/COL
Chervil	Limited	Limited	USA
Chives	Steady	Steady	MEX
Cilantro	Steady	Steady	USA/MEX
Dill	Steady	Steady	USA/MEX
Epazote	Steady	Steady	MEX
Lemongrass	Steady	Steady	USA
Marjoram	Steady	Steady	USA
Mint	Steady	Steady	USA
Oregano	Steady	Steady	USA
Italian Parsley	Steady	Steady	USA
Rosemary	Steady	Steady	USA
Sage	Steady	Steady	USA
Savory	Steady	Limited	USA
Sorrel	Steady	Steady	USA
Tarragon	Steady	Steady	MEX
Thyme	Steady	Steady	USA
Lavender	Steady	Steady	USA
Lemon Thyme	Steady	Steady	USA
Lime Leaves	Steady	Steady	USA

Melons

Cantaloupe:The cantaloupe market has remained stagnant due to lower demand the past few weeks. Guatemala has been experiencing very hot temperatures which is pushing sizing higher and providing some excellent quality. Production is peaking on 9/9Js with a limited number of 12/15s coming in but enough to cover all contracted needs. The quality of the cantaloupe remains at optimum levels with excellent color and some of the best eating fruit we have witnessed all season. Brix levels remain consistently in the 13-16% range. Carton weights are also increasing as seed cavities get smaller and brix levels go up. Local cantaloupe available out of Florida this week.

Honeydew:With limited honeydew crossings currently through Nogales, western demand has started to trickle back to the east and has assisted movement on this side. Current sizing had been primarily 5/5Js from both Guatemala and Honduras production, but we are beginning to see a slight shift with a few more 6s by end of the week arrivals. Quality of the honeydews has been very good especially on second cycle production from Guatemala. Brix is ranging 12-15%

Watermelon: ESCALATEDStrong demand continues as Mexico crosses fruit but markets should ease back as production out of Central and North Florida are ramping up. Overall quality is good and we expect to see very high demand and low supply through April.

Mixed Vegetables

Artichokes: WATCHLISTLighter supplies out of Oxnard the next two weeks. Demand has been strong during the Easter pull with higher pricing; quality has improved.

Arugula:Supplies are good, quality is fair due to some of the cool, rainy conditions that the Salinas Valley experienced over the winter.

Asparagus: ESCALATEDAsparagus production remains unchanged from Mexico, and we will see another drop in production in 7-10 days due to seasonality. Peru continues to increase production and markets remain the same. White asparagus continues to be very limited to non-existent from Peru.

Bok Choy:Supplies are light due to the rain and cold weather during the growing period leading up to transition. The market is active.

Broccoli/Broccoli Crowns: ESCALATEDSalinas broccoli volumes are steady as market remains firm at higher prices, quality is very good.

Broccolini and Sweet Baby Broccoli: Salinas is showing good quality with increasing volumes.

Brussels Sprouts:Overall Supplies and Quality remain good as Mexico and the Oxnard growing regions are in full production. Demand is increasing.

Carrots: (JUMBOS, MEDIUMS and CELLOS): ESCALATEDSteady supplies continue with good quality. Shippers still have light volume on Jumbos out of California.

Cauliflower: ESCALATEDWe have seen a significant decrease in supplies due planting delays from previous cool wet weather during planting season, quality remains good.

Celery: WATCHLIST: The market is trending higher as we head into next week with decreased supplies anticipated over the next few weeks.

Cilantro: Cilantro supplies, and Quality continue to improve.

Corn: Good supply available out of Florida and Mexico this week and Coachella is starting this week. Quality is good out of the southeast and South Georgia projected to start the 2nd week of May.

Fennel: Market is steady. Quality and supplies are good.

Garlic: The 2023-2024 California Garlic is in full swing. Quality is good.

Ginger: Supplies and market are steady

Green Cabbage: Supplies are steady with very good Quality. Demand is good.

Green Onions: ESCALATEDWe are seeing better supplies out of Mexico, quality is improving and the market remains at higher-than-normal levels.

Mushrooms: Stable supply and good Quality available.

Napa Cabbage: We are seeing some quality issues in Napa with many shippers reporting some seeder issues to start the season. We should see an improvement in quality through the month.

Parsley (Curly, Italian): Supplies and Quality are good, market is steady.

Rapini: Quality is good, supplies continue light. Market is strong with supplies continuing light through next week.

Red Cabbage: ESCALATED Quality is good although supplies continue lighter. Market is steady.

Spinach (Bunched & Baby): Supplies are good, quality is fair due to some of the cool, rainy conditions that the Salinas Valley experienced over the winter.

Spring Mix: Supplies are good, quality is fair due to cool and rainy conditions that the Salinas Valley experienced over the winter.

Snow Peas and Sugar Snaps: ESCALATED Guatemala's snow peas and sugar snap production has dropped due to the heat and lack of rain. Out of the west, there is a steady supply of snows, but sugar snaps will be limited for the next few weeks due to field transitions.

Onions: ESCALATED

The onion market remains strong, but for a third consecutive week, it did not increase. White onions remain nonexistent in Idaho/Oregon, and extremely tight in Washington. We did begin to see a few more Mexican whites, and even a handful of yellows begin to cross in a small way this week. This would line up with the reports that Mexico has quit purchasing the domestic supply out of the Pacific Northwest as well. We are anticipating that in the next 1-2 weeks, Mexico will start bringing across a large enough crop to help ease the supply concerns in the Pacific Northwest. We should see Texas onions start about the first or second week in March as well. For the first time in a long while, it would appear that there is some relief around the corner. Growers in the Northwest continue to experience a decrease in packouts with each passing week that the onions sit in storage. While this is often a recipe for the market to increase, we are seeing more growers want to run higher volumes of product at the current FOB levels, and not risk further shrink and claims as we get later into the season. If there are no weather events or unexpected supply interruptions, we feel there is a good chance that we have hit the ceiling on the current market for the time being. This can change very quickly should a weather event occur down in Texas/Mexico. California has experienced quite a bit of rain, and summer onion growers are becoming bullish that this may have an effect on yields this Summer. However, it is still too early to tell how supply and FOBs will behave from May and beyond.

Potatoes:

The market continues to feel stable on all sizes and grades for the moment, with the exception of 40ct potatoes. While potatoes as a whole should remain plentiful, we do anticipate 40ct potatoes will continue to command a premium more often than not until the end of the crop. They have continued to be available for mixers, but we are not seeing very much straight load availability, or even availability in heavy volume. There will be some lots that are better than others throughout the season, but this does appear to be a theme moving forward. Because of this, we do anticipate that we may see a gap between 40ct/50ct and the rest of the sizes. The good news is that food service sized cartons in the middle size range (60/70/80) appear to be plentiful. Unfortunately, at their current return levels on 90s/10s/2s and retail bags, growers are losing quite a bit of money. We will see Norkotahs wind down around the middle of Q2 and will be left exclusively with Burbanks (around the end of April). This will continue until new crop Norkotahs begin shipping fresh from the field in August. In general, there are no major headwinds expected in the potato market during Q2.

Tomatoes: East Coast

- **Round Tomatoes: ESCALATED** Markets remain escalated as weather last week caused delays and yield loss in the older crops throughout Immokalee, which has put extra pressure on the market until growers can start packing the spring regions. We expect higher markets through the 3rd week of April when we expect to see more volume out of the newer areas. Quality will be hit and miss over the next week.
- **Roma Tomatoes:** Markets remain unstable with good volume available this week. Quality is much better this week.
- **Grape Tomatoes:** Good supply and quality available
- **Cherry Tomatoes: ESCALATED** We expect to see very short crops, escalated pricing, and potential for pro-rates continue through March.

Tomatoes: Mexico

- **Round Tomatoes: ESCALATED** With the ongoing issues with the Winter Mexican tomato season; we are now in the Spring decline out of Sinaloa, combine this with a very slow to the Sonoran season we are seeing high markets and short supply once again. The Mexican Government is slated to start reducing water allocations in Sinaloa which will force some farmers to cease operations prematurely. We will see some supply GAPS until Sonora can effectively start harvesting fruit. Currently, they are behind and already projecting below normal yields; ongoing cold weather combined with late rains have hurt pollination and maturation of the fruit and plants. We hope to see some of this improve over the next 4 weeks as other growing regions throughout Mexico are scheduled to ramp up and assist in some of the current shortfalls but that is still weeks away.
- **Roma Tomatoes:** Good supply and quality available this week. We expect volatility in the roma market over the next 3 weeks.
- **Grape Tomatoes:** Steady supply and good Quality available crossing through McAllen and Nogales.

- **Cherry Tomatoes: ESCALATED**Crops out of Mexico are slowly improving and we are seeing a downward trend on price as the volume increases. Unfortunately, with the imbalance on the east coast due to less acreage planted and weather-related pressure, markets remain at record highs. We will see this continue until Florida can produce volume consistently.
- **Medley Grape Tomatoes: ESCALATED**Lighter volume this week with fair Quality.
- **Tomato on the Vine:** Steady volume available this week.

California Tomatoes

- Slated to begin mature greens out of the desert in late May.

APPLES

Apples:Washington State Apples remain in good promotable volumes on most varieties. Quality has been very good and is expected to remain good for the foreseeable future. Sizing is trending toward smaller sizes, 100s and smaller. Gala apples are seeing roughly one million fewer packages than last year.

Pears:Availability is down on Anjous, and Barlett is expected to see a rise in markets over the coming weeks.

Other Fruit

Domestic stone fruit on the horizon with cherries coming off first in Late April/ Early May followed by apricots, peaches, and nectarines. Californian table grapes should start in the desert in June and Georgia is projected to start peaches mid-May.