



## ***Weekly Market Review February 27, 2025***

### **Overview**

We will continue to see strong production out of South Florida on several items, with good quality and availability across multiple commodities. Mixed Hot Peppers, particularly Caribes, were the lightest in supply. Similar availability and quality are observed through Nogales and McAllen. Markets remain tight on Yellow Squash and Eggplant. The offshore Table Grape season has improved, with stable supply. Melons have also turned the corner, showing excellent volume and quality out of the ports as well as crossing through Nogales. Banana and Pineapple availability remains limited; shippers are asking we continue to be flexible in pineapple sizes. Industry supply remains limited, and the market is tightening as Mexico's supply stabilizes. Demand is expected to stay steady over the next few weeks, with higher prices expected to persist. Large fruit continues to command a premium and remains scarce due to the current size curve. Field conditions in Mexico are yielding a high percentage of grade 2 fruit, a trend that is expected to continue. From now through July, the size curve will continue to favor smaller fruit, and historically, Loca (summertime) fruit also tends to be smaller. An extended rainy season has also contributed to an increased proportion of grade 2 fruit. The USDA's industry-wide restrictions on packhouse production hours further limit packing capacity. Meanwhile, the U.S. market is expected to face increased competition for supply from Mexico, as national demand in Mexico rises during Lent, which runs from March 5 through Easter on April 20. Mexico's projected crop volume for the remainder of the 2024-2025 season, expected to conclude in late June, has declined by approximately 20% as of week 8. This reduction equates to an estimated weekly shortfall of 5 million pounds. However, supply out of California is expected to increase steadily in the coming weeks, helping to offset some of the market constraints. The warmer weather is coming to the desert growing regions. Overall supplies are looking good, but now we have to keep an eye on the temperatures and see how the heat will affect all the commodities. We know that bugs will be a potential issue, especially on Cilantro and Kale, so we will keep a close eye on that. Overall, supplies are looking stable. Endive, Escarole, Cilantro, Fennel, and Spinach remain escalated, with supply shortages driving market conditions. Bok Choy and Leeks remain at the extreme trigger level. Red Cabbage is still slightly escalated, though overall Cabbage supplies have improved. Since the warmer weather has arrived, soil temperatures should continue to rise, and conditions should start to normalize. Better supplies and quality are on the horizon. While the cool weather has moved out, warm weather will likely attract insects, and we are still seeing some epidermal peel on Iceberg and leafy greens. Those will be the challenges we face right now. Insects will be something that the fields will battle throughout March. Aphids are likely to target Arugula, Kale and Cilantro so we will be monitoring those items closely. We will keep an eye on those items and all leafy greens and keep everyone updated on any issues. As a reminder, some growers have items that do not transfer to Yuma, meaning additional fees will apply throughout the Yuma season.

### Market Alert List

- **Asparagus – ESCALATED**
- **Avocados – ESCALATED**
- **Bok Choy – EXTREME**
- **Cabbage, Red – ESCALATED**
- **Celery Organic – ESCALATED**
- **Cilantro – ESCALATED**
- **Endive and Escarole – ESCALATED**
- **Fennel, Anise – EXTREME**
- **Herbs – ESCALATED**
- **Hot Peppers (Caribe) – ESCALATED**
- **Leeks – EXTREME**
- **Limes – Escalated on some sizes**
- **Napa – ESCALATED**
- **Parsley (Italian & Curly) – ESCALATED**
- **Spinach – ESCALATED**

### Watch List

1. **Banana and Pineapple**
2. **Broccolini**
3. **Arugula**
4. **Cabbage, Green**
5. **Cauliflower**
6. **French Beans**
7. **Kale**
8. **Lettuce, Iceberg**
9. **Lettuce, Romaine**
10. **Ginger**
11. **Snow Peas & Sugar Snap Peas**
12. **Squash, Yellow**
13. **Eggplant**

### Fruits & Vegetables

**Avocados: ESCALATED** Industry supply is limited, and the market is tightening up as Mexico's supply levels off. A harvest of 67.2M pounds was reported for week 8 out of Mexico, with 51.8M pounds shipped to the U.S. Jalisco currently accounts for 7.8% of the total volume exported from Mexico to the U.S. Additionally, Mexico's projected crop volume for the remainder of the 2024-2025 season, which is expected to conclude in late June, has decreased by approximately 20% as of week 8. Equivalent to 5M pounds less per week. Sizing out of Mexico is expected to continue trending toward smaller sizes. In California, harvest volumes doubled last week, as anticipated, due to the lack of rainfall. The crop estimate remains at 355M pounds for the season, closely aligning with the previous season's total of 346M pounds. Larger, more consistent volumes are expected in April and should continue into September. The size distribution will initially favor 48s and smaller for the first few months, with larger sizes becoming more available later in the season. Colombia is currently in a lower production period; however, volumes have remained steady. Production is expected to increase in April as the new crop cycle begins. The current dry matter is averaging 32.8%.

**Bananas: WATCHLIST:** Banana imports remain light but will improve slowly over the coming weeks as more vessels arrive from the Tropics. A combination of cooler and poorer-than-desired weather in the tropics as well as logistic challenges impacted the global supply over the past three weeks. We could see minor pro-rates across the network but that should subside this week. Overall, banana quality has been good despite being in the winter cycle. We are advising distributors and customers to keep a close eye on ripeness; there may be some need to store fruit in warmer locations or wrap fruit. With inventories being light, we see higher turns at the port and ripening centers; some of the fruit may not reach optimum color prior to arrival.

**Pineapples: WATCHLIST** Pineapples will remain tight and are not expected to improve until the end of February, with peak volume hitting in May. Flexibility in sizes will be necessary over the next several weeks.

**Table Grapes:** Stable supply is available on whites, reds, globes and black varieties, and we hit a stable production cycle on grapes from Peru and Chile. Quality is good.

## **Berries**

**Strawberries:** Strawberry production across key growing regions faced varied challenges due to weather conditions. Heavy rainfall in Santa Maria halted production two weeks ago, but a return to sunny weather has allowed growers to complete post-rain cleanup. Quality fruit is beginning to emerge, though smaller sizes and some water-related damage persist. Production is expected to steadily improve as weather conditions stabilize, with March projected to bring above-normal volumes. In Mexico, high temperatures and wide temperature swings are causing uneven ripening, and overall production is in a steady decline as the season nears its end. Smaller growers have already ceased operations, and fruit size is trending smaller. Quality concerns, particularly bruising and soft skin, remain a focus for shipments arriving out of Mexico. Florida has experienced fluctuating temperatures with light rain, but no significant damage has been reported. Cooler weather is expected to slow production in the short term but may improve fruit quality in the long run. Peak production is still anticipated in early March, though there is a risk of rain damage if heavier rainfall occurs. Across all regions, growers remain proactive in managing quality concerns and adjusting harvesting strategies to optimize supply and maintain fruit integrity.

**Blackberries:** Blackberry quality remains strong, with medium to large sizing, good sheen, and firm fruit. However, some challenges persist, including red cell regression, attached calyx, and occasional soft or leaking berries. Volume is holding steady at peak levels through July, though a slight decline is expected toward the end of February. Organic production is tapering off earlier than anticipated as the season nears its conclusion.

**Raspberries:** Raspberry quality remains strong, with vibrant red color, good firmness, and mostly medium-sized fruit, with some larger berries mixed in. While some overripe and crumbled fruit is present, crews are diligently working to exclude them from packs. Volume is expected to remain at a consistent peak through April, with a slight decline anticipated toward the end of February. Organic production is performing well, with steady availability expected as we move into peak production, ensuring a decent supply through March.

**Blueberries:** In Mexico, warm temperatures persist, with conventional production at its peak, expected to last through mid-April before steadily declining into May. Organic production has concluded for the season, with a supply gap anticipated until August. Quality remains excellent, though some redberries, soft fruit, and shriveling are being observed. Chile is wrapping up its season earlier than expected due to high heat and rain events, though arriving fruit has shown excellent quality, size, and color. Conventional shipments will continue through March, with limited open-market availability due to reduced Chilean estimates. Organic shipments will also remain consistent through March. Oxnard is seeing favorable weather, and organic blueberry production is ramping up with excellent size, flavor, and bloom. Volume is increasing quickly, with peak production expected in late March. Florida is set to begin conventional blueberry production in the second week of March, though recent cool and wet weather on the Mid-East Coast has slightly reduced early-season estimates. Despite this, the region is expected to start strong, with good quality and solid Jumbo berry volume.

## **Citrus**

**Oranges:** Quality from California remains excellent with very good supplies. Pricing on smaller sizes, 113's and 138's, is firming up as the size structure is switching, but the overall market is stable.

**Lemons:** Good supplies and very good quality out of all growing areas in California. Ideal time for promotions.

**Lime: ESCALATED ON SOME SIZES** The Lime market is slightly stronger with pricing on some of the smaller sizes escalated. Current demand has increased due to much better weather across the country. We continue to see the presence of oil spots and styler-end breakdown from the rains a few weeks ago, which generally appears after repack/sorting while the fruit is in transit. Sizing is running heavier to smaller size, which we expect to see throughout the remainder of Q1 as large sizes will be scarce.

**Imports/Specialties:** California Mandarins, Grapefruit, Cara-Cara, and Blood Oranges are seeing very good quality.

### **West Coast Lettuce**

**Iceberg: WATCHLIST** Lettuce supplies and quality look good. Weights have improved but we are already seeing some premature pinking with the stress of the new hot temperatures. **Iceberg VA:** Quality and supplies look good.

**Romaine & Romaine Hearts: WATCHLIST** Romaine and Romaine heart supplies are good. Supplies are steady and are improving with the warmer weather. Organic Romaine Hearts are slightly escalated due to limited supplies from the previous frost damage. **Romaine VA:** Quality and supplies are good.

**Green Leaf and Red Leaf:** Overall quality and supplies look good.

### **Eastern and Western Vegetables:**

**Green Bell Pepper:** Good supply available in Nogals and South Florida. Quality is mostly good.

**Color Bell Pepper:** Good supply available in Nogals and South Florida. Quality is mostly good.

**Mini Sweet Pepper:** Supply stable this week loading in Nogales.

**Mixed Chili Pepper: ESCALATED** Supplies in general are good across most varieties out of Mexico: Jalapeño, and Poblano were good this week. Caribes were shorter this week.

**Eggplant: WATCHLIST** Lighter domestic supply and quality is mixed. Good supply and excellent quality out of Mexico this week.

**Slicer Cucumbers:** Good supply crossing through Nogales and McAllen as well as Honduras. Quality is good.

**English Cucumbers:** Good supply available this week crossing from Mexico. Quality on new crop out of Mexico was good.

**Pickles:** Lighter supply available crossing through Nogales. Quality is outstanding.

**Green Beans:** Excellent supply available, and quality is good crossing through Nogales as well as loading in Florida.

**French Beans: WATCHLIST** The supply of French beans from Guatemala remains steady, though container delays continue to be an issue. In Mexico, supply is limited due to adverse weather conditions, impacting overall availability.

**Zucchini/Yellow Squash: WATCHLIST** Good volume and quality available shipping from all locations on Italian; markets are shorter on yellow.

### **Herbs: ESCALATED**

Herb supply and quality from Mexico remain marginal due to cold weather, particularly affecting **Basil and Tarragon**, along with **Sage and Thyme**. Supply inconsistencies are expected over the next few weeks but should improve as temperatures rise. **Arugula and Cilantro** are also in limited supply due to frost damage, resulting in small, uneven bunches, purple stems, and mechanical issues. Some growers are implementing prorating because of these challenges.

### **Melons**

We have finally moved into fields that were not impacted by Tropical Storm Sara back in November, and volume has increased on both cantaloupe and honeydew. After two months of record pricing levels, markets have started to settle as production becomes more normalized for this time of the year.

**Cantaloupe:** Cantaloupe arrivals continue to show optimum quality characteristics with very nice higher color fruit. Sizing will be peaking on reg 9s followed by jumbos then 12s. With increased supplies there should be a good percentage of all sizes to work with. Internally brix levels are maintaining a solid range of 13-15% with an excellent flavor profile.

**Honeydew:** Honeydew production from Honduras continued to peak over the past week but will see a rapid drop from new arrivals over the next seven days as they begin to gap. Sizing has been peaking on 5/6s, which is allowing for all orders to be covered without issue. Some Honduran fruit has had some age on it from being in storage but is quickly being rotated out. We expect to see increased numbers begin by this coming Friday, which is highly anticipated from what has been in the market for the past few weeks. Brix levels are expected to be mostly in the 12-14% range based off post-harvest QC reports.

**Watermelon:** Seedless watermelons continue to move higher with less fruit from both Guatemala and Mexico over the past two weeks. Demand is finally surpassing supply, which is pushing the market close to the \$30 level on cartons and \$300 on bins with limited arrivals expected.

### **Mixed Vegetables**

**Artichokes:** Supplies and Quality are both good.

**Asparagus: ESCALATED** Asparagus supply from Caborca and San Luis continues to improve and is expected to strengthen through the end of March. Peruvian volume remains very low due to seasonal declines. Market activity continues to slow.

**Bok Choy: EXTREME** Quality is good, but supplies are still limited. The light supplies are driving the market.

**Broccoli/Broccoli Crowns:** Quality and supplies look good. Floret Mini's are still tight, and some growers are still short on those.

**Broccolini and Sweet Baby Broccoli: WATCHLIST** Quality and supplies look okay but some growers are extremely light on supplies. Expect to be held to averages in some markets.

**Brussels Sprouts:** Quality and supplies look good.

**Carrots (JUMBOS, MEDIUMS and CELLOS):** The Desert growing regions have started with good supplies and very good quality. Expect steady supplies through the end of the desert season which will run into late April or early May.

**Cauliflower: WATCHLIST** Supplies, and quality are looking very good.

**Celery:** Quality and supplies are improving. There has been some weak texture reported causing some mechanical damage. Growers are covering contract business. Organic Celery is triggered due to light supplies.

**Corn:** Stable supply and good quality available this week out of Mexico and Florida.

**Fennel: EXTREME** The fields are seeing lower yields and therefore there is a shortage in supply. Pricing will stay escalated until supplies improve.

**Kale: WATCHLIST** Supplies have improved, and quality is good, but we are adding it to the watchlist due to the possibility of insect pressure.

**Leeks: EXTREME** Leeks are very tight right now and some growers are holding to averages. The market remains escalated.

**Garlic:** California Garlic is showing very good quality with lighter supplies. Demand is good.

**Ginger:** Supplies and markets are steady.

**Green Cabbage: WATCHLIST** Supplies and quality look good.

**Green Onions:** Supplies and quality look good.

**Mushrooms:** Supply is stable, and quality is good.

**Napa Cabbage: ESCALATED** Quality and supplies are improving but there is some insect pressure.

**Parsley (Italian & Curly): ESCALATED** Supplies and quality look good.

**Rapini:** Quality is good, but supply continues to be light. The market is strong and therefore the supplies will continue to be light.

**Red Cabbage: ESCALATED** Pricing is still escalating in some markets. The quality is good, but supplies are still light with some growers. The market remains very active.

**Spinach: ESCALATED** Supplies and quality are good. We have still seen some reports of weak texture, discoloration and wilting.

**Snow Peas and Sugar Snaps:** Market conditions are trending downward. Guatemalan snow peas and sugar snaps are seeing good production; however, high humidity in the growing regions is leading to some quality concerns. In Mexico, production of both snow peas and sugar snaps remains steady.

### **Onions:**

The Pacific Northwest storage supplies generally take a bit of a price increase in early Q1. While this is no guarantee, we do anticipate this will be the case with white and red onions. White supplies were light to begin with in the PNW, and we do not anticipate relief there until Mexico begins crossing their supply, which should take place around the middle of Q1 in February. They are typically not very big red suppliers, so we may see the continued pattern of reds remaining elevated until we get into the Spring/Summer months in California. At the moment, all reports are that Mexico will have a healthy crop in terms of quality and volume. Because of this, we are not anticipating the market to be volatile in the near future. However, the Texas crop is still too early to predict. The onions are still far from 'made' that a weather event could still impact their crop. If that were to happen, we would likely see a swift increase on all colors and sizes near the end of Q1.

### **Potatoes:**

No major changes are expected in the short term. Size profiles remain balanced at the moment, with volume deals on carton sizes alternating a bit on a weekly basis, meaning one week it will be 40/50, and the next it will be 80/90. Overall, size does seem to be more plentiful than smaller size count cartons. We will likely begin to see Norkotah supplies taper off toward the end of Q1, with most growers transitioning to Burbank's only during the beginning of Q2. When this takes place, we anticipate that supply could tighten up some as yields were believed to not be as plentiful in Burbank's as they were in Norkotahs this past year. It remains to be seen just how impacted pricing will be and on what sizes exactly. However, we do feel confident that we will not see a cheaper market than we are seeing today.

### **Tomatoes:**

#### **East Coast**

- Round and Romas Tomatoes: Harvesting is now in full swing but may slow as a cooler weather pattern remains in place this week. We do expect to see markets remain stable. Quality is excellent.
- Snacking Tomatoes (Cherry, Grape and Medley): Good supply and strong quality available.

#### **Mexico**

- Round Tomatoes and Roma Tomatoes: Stable supply and good quality crossing through Nogales and McAllen. The quality has been good.
- Snacking Tomatoes (Cherry, Grape and Medley): Steady supply available and Quality is good.
- Tomato on the Vine: Steady volume available this week.

## **Other Fruit:**

**Apples:** Last year, Washington State Apple growers shipped just over 136 million boxes of Apples. This year's total is projected at 124 million. Prices will likely be higher this year and much more manageable of a crop.

### **Projections below**

- Red Delicious – 4 million down from last Season
- Gold Delicious – 280,000 boxes down from last Season
- Gr Smiths – 1.1 million boxes down
- Fuji – 1.5 million boxes down
- Gala – 3 million boxes down
- Honeycrisp – 5 million boxes down
- Cosmic – Up 2.7 million boxes

**Pears:** The Northwest Pear Crop (Washington/Oregon) is substantially down from last season due to below-average temps in late Feb/early March affecting bud development. The higher elevation areas in Washington were severely impacted, especially the Wenatchee Valley. The Oregon Growing Region was not affected as much as Wenatchee, Washington, but it was still impacted.

- The Bartlett Crop out of the Northwest shows 3.8 million shipped last season vs a projected 2.9 million this year for a 14% decrease. It's not substantial in terms of overall volume, but it's still a factor. The cold temperatures will affect the grade, so more Fancy's will be packed than normal. Because the crop is smaller, the size profile has increased by 1 to 2 sizes. Barts to finish by the end of February/beginning of March.
- Anjous report at least a 30% total decrease, or 1.85 million boxes less than last year. Also, outside of the Wenatchee Valley, there will be more fancy and, for the first time in many years, a 3rd grade Anjous packed. When we start to pack Anjous– this will be your value pear. Anjous to start the week of September 16th, and if growers make it through June, I will be surprised.
- Red Anjous are down 7% or 47,000 boxes, so it is nothing dramatic like the others. The question on Red Anjous is whether or not we will see smaller pears such as 120/135 cts. Red pears are supposed to be 1 to 2 sizes larger out of the PNW. Red pears have started with
- Starkrimsons and will transition into Red Anjou from November through May.
- Bosc are down 63% out of the great Northwest, or 1.38 million boxes. This variety was mostly affected, and markets will be much higher than in previous years. Bosc has slowly started with a potential end date last January/middle of February.

**Pomegranate:** Limited availability.

**Asian Pears:** Peaking in volume. Quality is outstanding.

**Cherries:** Offshore supplies are steady loading out of Philadelphia.

**Tree Fruit:** Improving supply of Offshore Peaches, Plums and Nectarines available.

**Kiwi Fruit:** Supplies fair out of California as well as offshore landing on the East Coast.

**Persimmons:** Active markets and quality are good on both Hachiya and Fuyu.

**Quince:** Limited supply available this week.