



Market Update

September 16th, 2020

What more can 2020 throw at us? The past few days of hazardous air quality add one more “what the heck” to the long list of 2020 noteworthy events.

Regardless of all the curveballs that have been thrown at us, business goes on and fall transition is upon us.

Mary’s Harvest Pride value added: Unusual category to start with? Not so anymore. Last week it was our 4th largest dollar volume category and 3rd largest by units. Now is a good time to adjust your presentations into more of a fall look. If you need suggestions, ask your sales rep for input.

Broccoli/Cauli: One up, one stable. Crowns continue to climb gradually. Quality is only fair, best to keep displays turning. Cauliflower is relatively inexpensive, but shelf life is reduced and quality average.

Cabbage: Washington grown, quality is very good and prices are down.

Brussel Sprouts: Not a big item to move the needle but prices are right and sprouts always respond well to ads and in store promos.

Asparagus: The timing is right to push some grass. Versatile enough to be cooked indoors or on the grill, quality is tops and prices are hot!

Carrots: I just off the phone with Bolthouse Farms getting an update on this season. Typically we would load cello carrots out of Prosser, Washington from July 4 through October. We have not been able to

source cello carrots from Washington yet – they just aren't sizing up. Add to that the increased demand on the category and you have a demand exceeds supply situation. Bolthouse feels they are catching up and we hope to change loading lead times down from 5 days to 3. Also on the BH agenda was the prorates of juice products. BH has a rigorous QC Process that requires each batch of juice to be tested to insure quality and safety. This takes a few days of analysis after the juice is produced. Demand of BH juice has skyrocketed due to COVID demand, and the elimination of Odwalla in the market place has added to BH juice sales. They assure me they have the capacity, their challenge is forecasting enough, fast enough.

Corn: Probably the last week for 48ct corn, it's been a very successful year. We'll go to the 4 pack overwrap packages next week.

Leafies: Romaine price is rising as is iceberg. Red & green leaf are stable for the moment. Excessive heat has pushed many fields ahead. We expect a gap between the central California district and the desert, possibly mid-October. Quality is fair as product reflects some stress from the heat.

Salads: As goes lettuce so goes salads. Keep inventories tight and respect the cold chain as always.

Potatoes: Market steady.

Tomatoes: TOV's & HH beef starting to drop. Rounds and romas stable.

Ornamentals: Corns & gourds are in the house today, pumpkins next week. Don't forget the strawberry popcorn.

Apples: New crop honeys, raves, sweetango, and galas are available now. We expect new fujis next week, golds & reds to follow. We met

with the folks from Chelan and will offer new crop Sugar Bee, Lucy Rose, and Rockits when they are available.

Avocados: Steady as she goes – sales are good.

Berries: Markets are rising as we move from summer to fall. Lack of sunlight (due to smoke) has slowed the growth of strawberries. Blues are winding down out of Canada.

Grapes: Barry has used a “hands on” inspection service that gives him daily updates and oversees our product getting loaded. This enables us to buy the best grapes of the day and make sure we get what we ordered on our truck. We have some specialty grapes on hand now. Ask your rep about Sweet Sapphire and Candy Dreams.

Citrus: We’ll have import mandarins, caras, bloods for a few more weeks. We expect new crop navel oranges around mid-October. Limes continue to be hard to source and many arrivals have been rejected.

Tree Fruit: Peaches and nectarines are done, we’ll stay with black plums into October.

The ability to adapt is a great skill. It has prolonged the career of many a baseball player. Chris Taylor, Willie Bloomquist, and Dee Gordon come to mind. It’s why quarterbacks call audibles at the line of scrimmage. Those that can adjust will understandably increase their chance of success.

I was talking to my wife & daughter a couple days ago. Think about our young people today and the impact 2020 will forever have on their lives. First a pandemic, then school closure or “e-learning” for the balance of the school year. An extended summer, but not one of great freedom. Vacations and camps were cancelled. Now it’s back to school in some form. In class learning, remote learning, or a combination of

the two. I have three seventh grade granddaughters and one fifth grader. It amazes me the way they roll with the punches and make the best out of each day's challenges. I believe this generation will grow up stronger and smarter than I ever hoped to be, and our future is bright as ever.

You know, I have to tie all this into what produce managers do every day – always have. Ads have changed, product availability is sometimes sporadic, markets are more volatile. Yet at the end of the day each one of you has made the most of the challenges and opportunities that come your way. Be like my granddaughters – Call on audible at the line of scrimmage and go for it!

P.S. It is worth noting that the Mariners are still in the playoff picture. Not bad for a bunch of rookies and a couple of old guys!