

Special Alert Fresh Produce Transition



Vegetables to Limit



Lettuce – Harvesting gaps in California will impact all whole head Lettuces through May. Quality will be poor to fair, supplies will be limited and pricing will be higher than normal. Use pre-cut Iceberg or Romaine, single leaf Romaine or Green Leaf, or Romaine Hearts for best quality and value.



Broccoli/Cauliflower – Harvesting gaps in California will impact Broccoli and Cauliflower supplies through May. Quality will be poor to fair, and pricing will be higher than normal. Use pre-cut products like Broccoli Florets or Crowns, and Cauliflower Florets, for best quality and value.



Avocados – A combination of poor growing conditions and labor issues in Mexico will impact all Avocados through at least June. Almost all Avocados consumed in the U.S. are grown in Mexico during the spring. Pricing will be higher than normal, and fully-ripened product will be less available. Use #2-grade product in a 48- to 60-CT size for best value.



Vegetables to Promote



Bell Peppers – Expect great quality and pricing on all sizes and colors through May. Locally grown product may be available in the Southeast and Midwest by mid-spring.



Cucumbers – All sizes and grades of field-grown Cucumbers will have excellent quality and pricing through May.



Squash – Summer squash (Yellow, Zucchini) will have excellent quality and pricing through May. Medium and Fancy grades are the best values. Locally grown product may be available in the Southeast and Midwest by mid-spring.



Eggplant – Medium and Fancy grade/size will have excellent quality and pricing through May.



Root Vegetables – Beets, Leeks and Carrots will have excellent quality and pricing through May. Locally grown product may be available in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic by mid-spring.



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The spring migration of growing areas from Arizona to California for certain commodities, also called “transition”, began in early March and will continue through the end of April. As the weather warms up during this time period, many growers gradually produce row crops (including lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, berries and other commodities) in growing areas further north.

During spring transition, quality and availability issues tend to be more common, since the growing areas are limited and susceptible to weather-related issues.

This particular transition is shaping up to be unusually challenging. The Arizona season had extreme temperature swings, ending with weeks of extreme heat and rain, which accelerated plant growth and harvesting, and brought the season to an early end. At the same time, central California experienced heavy rain and flooding throughout February and early March, which affected planting. Harvesting will be lighter than expected during certain weeks throughout early spring. This will lead to short supplies on many row crops: most likely iceberg, romaine, leaf lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower and celery. Pricing may be higher than usual, and quality is at a higher risk of being impacted.

