

MARKET NEWS

MEXICAN BORDER OUTLOOK

Taken from a note written by the United Fresh Produce Association:

Proposed Border Shutdown will Create Economic Uncertainty for Fresh Produce Industry



UNITED FRESH MEMBER ALERT

“On March 27, 2019, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Kevin McAleenan stated that CBP will be reassigning up to 750 CBP officers from ports of entry along the southern border to assist U.S. Border Patrol with the processing of migrant crossings along the border. Because of the large reassignment of CBP officers, importers and exporters should expect to see “a slowdown in the processing of trade” along the U.S.-Mexico border for an unspecified period. CBP will be forced to close some processing lanes, potentially in the ports of El Paso, Laredo, Tucson and San Diego. In addition, officials at the port in Nogales, AZ have announced closing commercial border traffic on Sundays.

These steps will cause significant harm to growers, wholesale distributors, transportation companies, grocery stores, restaurants and most importantly, U.S. consumers. On behalf of the fresh produce industry and the broad cross-section of members we represent, we urge the Administration to reconsider these steps that would profoundly interrupt our ability to bring fresh, healthy produce to all Americans. If these actions are implemented, the Administration will cause millions in economic losses while increasing costs to consumers across North America.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are the most perishable and sensitive to timely inspection and delivery of any farm products. Disruptions of weeks, days or even hours cut supply chains meaning lost wages and lost revenues. Already, inspection delays are being felt from El Paso to San Diego costing farmers, truck drivers and companies of all sizes. In fact the San Diego Association of Governments and California Department of Transportation have indicated that even an extra 15 minutes of wait time could generate as much as \$1 billion in lost productivity and 134,000 lost in jobs annually.

The solution to our immigration problems is not closing the border or slowing commercial traffic, but for Congress and the Administration to work together on real immigration reform. That is why our association continues to call upon our nation’s leaders to get on with sensible reform that ensures a legal workforce for agriculture together with a functional border.”

Talk of closing the border with Mexico has created concern and uncertainty in the fresh produce industry. At this point, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) plans to reassign as many as 750 officers from ports of entry (where trucks cross), to assist US Border Patrol with processing migrant crossings along the border. The CBP noted there will be an inevitable slowdown in the processing of trade. Some ports of entry may close on Sundays, and others will just see longer wait times.

In Texas, for example:

- Due to short staff, some of bridge lanes are closed
- World Trade Bridge – out of 15 lanes, 6 are open for regular cargo and 3 for FAST
- Colombia Bridge – 2 regular and 1 FAST lane are open
- World Trade Bridge – usually processes 8,000 northbound daily, they are currently processing 5,000. 3,000 trailers backed up in Mexico
- Colombia Bridge – usually processes 1,700 northbound daily, they are currently processing 1,000. 700 trailers backed up in Mexico

Source: andnowuknow.com

Driscoll’s Berries has warned that loadings of their fresh fruit crossing from Mexico could be delayed 1-3 days moving forward this month. This may create occasional out-of-stocks, reduction in freshness, and higher costs in transportation.



ORGANIC AND CONVENTIONAL HASS AVOCADOS

ALERT! Mexican growers are struggling to find good quality **Hass Avocados** in their orchards. Additionally, some are delaying harvests to drive up prices. Border delays are causing more issues.

Supply is tight and demand continues to stay very strong. Prices are up dramatically and we expect this to continue through April. It will continue to be a struggle on supply going into Easter (with little to no harvesting during Holy Week), and then Cinco de Mayo demand, with prices continuing to rise weekly, if not daily. We strongly recommend ceasing promotional activity for April and early May.

MARKET NEWS ORGANIC OUTLOOK

PROMOTABLE ORGANIC TOMATOES

Organic Beefsteak Tomatoes markets remain very promotable out of Canada this week. Quality continues to impress. Continue to promote with confidence! **Organic Cluster Tomatoes** are also promotable this week, and quality has been excellent as well. Prices will remain steady for April.

The quality and flavor of **Organic Grape Tomatoes** from Lady Moon Farms is outstanding. **Organic Cherry** and **Rainbow Cherry Tomatoes** are also available through early April from Florida.

Organic Heirloom Tomatoes are back in solid numbers from Fair Trade Covilli Brand and Local PA Hothouse Grower Toigo Farms. Harvests are really good as volume ramps up. We will have the "Darklooms" "Brandywine", and Mixed varieties all back in stock.

Organic Roma Tomatoes from Mexico continue to be available. Quality has been strong so far this season.



OG CITRUS

Late season **Organic Tango** and **Golden Nugget Mandarins** are available in good supply and flavor.

Organic Blood and **Navel Oranges** continue in excellent supply. **Organic Cara Cara Oranges** continue in steady supply. Harvests will wind down during April.

Organic Pummelos and **Minneola Tangelos** will finish up for the season by mid-April.

Organic Grapefruit continues in excellent supply with promotional opportunities available.

Organic Valencia Orange supplies out of Mexico are excellent with promotional opportunities available.



OG BERRIES

Organic Strawberry harvest supplies continue to improve. Quality is expected to continue to improve. Loading issues from border delays may cause sporadic out-of-stocks.

Organic Blackberries out of Mexico are improving in supplies weekly, but new border challenges are creating havoc and causing late arrivals and loading issues. Expect steady prices, but sporadic ins and outs due to the loading issues.

ALERT! Driscoll's **Organic Blueberries** have transitioned over to Mexican and California fruit. Prices have taken steep includes as we are in large, delicious proprietary varieties, also because of loading issues. Chilean product should finish here in early April.

ALERT! Driscoll's **Organic Raspberries** supplies remain very tight, and when you add in loading issues, things are a mess. Other brands are gapping.



OG GREENS & LETTUCE

Organic Green and **Lacinato Kale** are in excellent supply this week from Lady Moon Farms in Florida. Now is a great time to promote both items!

Organic Romaine Hearts are in steady supply from California. Look for good promotional opportunities for early to mid-April. Quality has been very nice.

Organic Iceberg Lettuce is back into steady supply.



OG BROCCOLI

Organic Bunch Broccoli is in much better supply headed towards mid-April out of Salinas, CA. Look for pricing to slide this upcoming week on all 14's.

Organic Broccoli Crowns will continue to be tight with limited availability.



OG CAULIFLOWER

Organic Cauliflower will still be limited for early April from California and Arizona. Quality has been very nice.

We're only a few weeks away from big new crop volume from Salinas, CA for mid to late-April promotion.



OG CELERY

ALERT! Organic Celery will continue to be extremely tight in supply and priced at record highs. We're also having to accept product with occasional aphids (small bugs).

We're hearing from multiple growers that this market will remain tight and expensive through May. Until then, we'll continue to source as much product from our growers as possible.



OG GRAPES

South African **Organic Red "Sweet Celebration"** and **Black Seedless "Melody" Grapes** continue in firm but steady supply.

Peruvian **Organic Red Seedless Grapes** are here for a short stint.

Things are on schedule for the Mexican **Organic Grape** season to begin the first or second week of May with a good season expected, barring any significant weather events.



OG PEARS

Argentinean **Organic Green** and **Red Bartlett Pears** continue with excellent quality and supply, with some significant promotional opportunities on green of all sizes.

Argentinean **Organic Anjou** and **Abate Pears** are expected to arrive in mid-April.

Washington **Organic Red Anjou, Green Anjou,** and **Bosc Pears** are in steady supply this week with the season expected to wrap up for good in late April.



OG WATERMELONS

Organic Mini Watermelons are back in good supply. Markets remain a little higher as only a few growers have started on early crops. Quality has been great so far.

Organic Watermelons (full size, seedless) will be back in this week in cartons. Bins have not started yet but look to order cartons to fill up your cut fruit sections



OG PEPPERS

Organic Colored Bell Peppers are now all being sourced from Holland. These new crop **Organic Peppers** are perfect! Pricing will begin to come down in April as supplies continue to improve.



OG SQUASH

Organic Zucchini Squash is plentiful at this time from Mexico and Florida. Now is a great time to promote while supplies are at peak levels. Quality is excellent.



OG ASPARAGUS

Organic Asparagus will remain promotable as Mexico and USA crops begin to peak at the same time. Quality has been excellent, continue to promote!



OG BABY BOK CHOY

ALERT! Organic Baby Bok Choy is still limited, but it looks like yields will be much better for mid-April. Look for better availability on new crop from Salinas, and lower pricing.



OG BEETS

ALERT! Organic Red and Gold Bunch Beets are very tight this week from California. Growers are still a few weeks away until more volume is ready to harvest. Look for pricing to remain higher than usual.



OG CUCUMBERS

Organic Cucumbers will be steady out of Mexico and Florida this week. Quality has been very nice.



OG MANGOS

Organic Ataulfo "Honey" Mangos should be in good availability for early April.

Organic Tommy Atkins Mangos from Mexico are in good supply. Border crossing issues have proven to be challenging here in early April, with protests and increased border traffic delays.



OG APPLES

Organic Gala Apples continue in excellent supply this week with some promotional opportunities available.

Organic Braeburn, Envy, Gold Delicious, Honeycrisp, Opal, and Jazz Apples are winding down for the season and are expected to finish in mid-April.

Organic Fuji, Granny Smith, Kanzi, Kiku, Piñata, Pink Lady, and Red Delicious Apples are in firmer supply as some varieties and shippers are finishing for the season when the import product begins in May.

OTHER STORIES

- New crop **Organic Red, Yellow, and White Potatoes** will soon get started out of the California desert and make their way to the east coast by mid to late-April. Price is expected to be extremely high out of the gate and should relax headed into May.

- **Organic Russet Potato** prices continue to push upwards this week as we see some stronger demand as we head into the late season storage crop.

- **ALERT!** We are in a gap on **Organic Sweet Onions**. New crop **Organic Vidalia Sweet Onions** out of Georgia are expected to begin in early May.

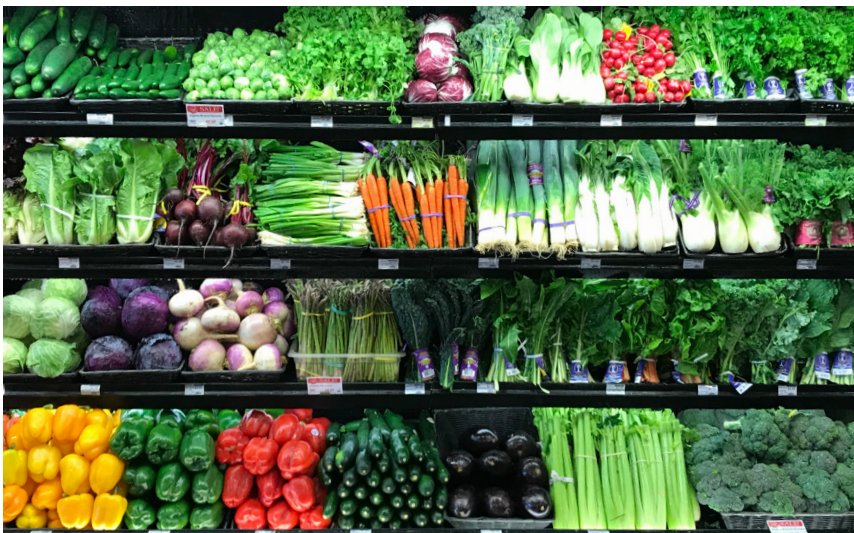
- Pricing on **Organic Red and Yellow Onions** have inched up this week but quality out of the Pacific Northwest is very nice.

- We should see steady pricing on **Organic Sweet Potatoes** out of California through Easter, at which time we will see pricing increase slightly through the end of the storage crop season.

- **Organic Limes** are slowly improving in supply. We should start to see better supplies and a slowly easing market.

- **Organic Lemons** out of California and Mexico continue in excellent supply and quality.

- **ALERT!** **Organic Pineapple** supplies are expected to tighten through Easter. Expect pricing to increase as supplies decrease.



EASTER MERCHANDISING TIPS

Easter is April 21st, just a couple of weeks away! A good plan for this special holiday needs to take shape now to make sure that we are set up for success. Four Seasons will have great quality organic and conventional produce for you to meet all your customers' special variety and traditional holiday needs.

MERCHANDISING NOTES:

- Order holiday semi-perishable and hard tonnage items early. Plan on getting your tonnage items into your stores by the Tuesday before Easter.
- Develop an off-peak or evening fill schedule for your hard goods (potatoes, onions, dips, dressings, nuts, etc).
- Stay ahead with ripening bananas and tomatoes in order to have ready-to-eat, mature fruit on display. Consumers will want to consume this product immediately.
- Easter business comes late. Good Friday & Saturday are crazy business days at the supermarket.
- If you bring in your key holiday volume items early this will help your department's efficiency and organization. It will also take pressure off of our warehouse selectors, loaders, and trucks to help prevent delayed deliveries on those crucial final days before the holiday weekend.
- If you are not waiting on trucks and have the product on hand, your department operations will run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Your time will be more productive working on the sales floor, engaging with your customers.



TRADITIONAL “MUST-HAVES” & OTHER EASTER ITEMS CHECKLIST:

VEGETABLES

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acorn & Butternut Squash | <input type="checkbox"/> Endive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artichokes | <input type="checkbox"/> Escarole |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asparagus & Asparagus Tips | <input type="checkbox"/> Fennel (Anise) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby Peeled Carrots | <input type="checkbox"/> Garlic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beets | <input type="checkbox"/> Green Beans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli | <input type="checkbox"/> Herbs (especially parsleys) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli Rabe | <input type="checkbox"/> Leeks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brussels Sprouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce (Romaine & Leaf) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabbage (Red, Green, Savoy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cauliflower | <input type="checkbox"/> Parsley Root |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celery & Celery Root | <input type="checkbox"/> Peas (Snow & Sugar Snap) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cole Slaw Kits | <input type="checkbox"/> Peppers (all colors) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collard Greens | <input type="checkbox"/> Radishes (bunched) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumbers (Field Grown & Euro) | <input type="checkbox"/> Salad Mixes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eggplant | <input type="checkbox"/> Shallots |



TRADITIONAL “MUST-HAVES” CHECKLIST (CONTINUED):

FRUIT

- Berries (all varieties)
- Cantaloupes
- Grapes (red & green seedless)
- Honeydew
- Kiwifruit
- Lemons & Limes (*essential for all seafood dishes that will be consumed through Easter*)
- Mandarins
- Navel Oranges (CA)
- Pineapples
- Watermelons (regular & mini seedless)

HARD GOODS

- New crop Red & Yellow Potatoes
- White & Russet Potatoes
- Sweet Potatoes

BAKING

- In-shell Nuts & Nut Meats
- Pine-nuts
- Dates
- Figs
- Raisins
- Prunes
- Coconuts

MISCELLANEOUS

- Potted Bulbs & Flowers
- Fresh-Cut Flowers
- Palm Crosses



2019 EASTER SCHEDULE

SATURDAY 4/20:

Standard delivery schedule.

Sales office open 8:30 am to 1:00 pm - taking orders for Monday delivery.

EASTER SUNDAY 4/21:

Standard delivery schedule. Offices **CLOSED**.

PASSOVER

Passover begins April 19, starting at sundown, and runs through April 27.

All foods consumed during this period must be Kosher

IMPORTANT PASSOVER HOLIDAY ITEMS:

Bitter Herbs are very important for the Sedar Plate - Horseradish, Dill, Endive, Escarole, Romaine Leeks, Onions, Ginger, and Soup Mix.

Take orders now for 50lb Horseradish, 25 lb Turnips, Beets & Parsnips, Full Case Dill, Root Parsley & Leeks.

VEGETABLES:

Beets, Carrots, Parsley & Parsley Root, Kirby & Euro Cucumbers, Green & Colored Peppers, Celery & Celery Root, Scallions, Spinach, Green Vegetables (No Beans), Red Cabbage, Turnips, Parsnips, Fennel, Garlic, Rosemary, Basil, Thyme, and Oregano.

FRUITS:

Pineapple, Peaches, Apricots, Nectarines, Apples, Oranges, All Berries, Melons, and Grapes

OTHER GOODS:

Sweet Potatoes & Yams, White, Gold, and Red Potatoes, Walnuts (in-shell & meats) Kosher for Pass-over dried fruits & honey

CERTIFIED KOSHER FOR PASSOVER ON SELECT ITEMS?

Dole - **YES**

Attitude/Veg Pro - **NO**

Taylor Farms/Green Giant - **YES**

Fresh Express - **YES**

Olivia's State Garden - **NO**

organicgirl - **YES**

Earthbound - **NO**



PHONE: 1.800.422.8384 | FAX: 1.717.721.2597 | www.fsproduce.com



HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



Four Seasons Produce will once again be donating to **PASA (Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture)**!

A portion of every case of organic produce & dairy products sold through **Earth Week April 22 - April 28** will be donated to PASA.

EARTH WEEK DONATION PARTICIPANTS:



For more information on PASA, check out their website www.pasafarming.org and follow Four Seasons Produce on social for fun & informational posts!

www.fsproduce.com



If your store would like to consider other ways to contribute and participate in this event, contact Melissa Cipollone at PASA:

Melissa Cipollone

Communications Strategist
Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)
melissa@pasafarming.org
814.349.9856 x708



MARKET NEWS CONVENTIONAL OUTLOOK

SPRING CROP JUMBO ARTICHOKEs

Artichokes are in steady volume and quality from both Salinas and Coachella, CA.

Larger sizes (12ct, 18ct) are readily available. Starting the week of April 8th, we will be into frost-free Artichokes.



CV WATERMELONS

Watermelons are back in stock from Florida! Quality is outstanding on this early crop - high sugar, with beautiful color. Florida looks to start full production in mid-April with multiple areas going.

Mini Watermelons continue to be in very limited supplies. The off-shore (Guatemala & Honduras) programs are finishing for the season and the new crop Mexico, Texas, and Florida seasons are not yet ready to begin harvests.



CV STRAWBERRIES & BLUEBERRIES

Strawberries are in much better supply this week out of California. We received our first fruit of the season, and it's excellent. Look for pricing to come back down to more normal levels during mid-April.

ALERT! Blueberries are still in tighter supply for early April.

However, new crop Blueberries will begin to increase in volume during April. Look for pricing to slide down on all 6 oz. and pints going forward. Quality has been excellent on all Florida and Mexican fruit.



CV SWEET CORN

Bi-Color Sweet Corn is very promotable right now. Florida is beginning their peak season which should be available through late May.

White Sweet Corn supplies will be tight this week as less and less farmers are growing the white variety and switching crops to mainly bi-color.



CV PEPPERS

Colored **Bell Pepper** markets are active. Canadian and Mexican volume is decent, but healthy demand continues to move prices to higher levels than expected.

Florida **Green Peppers** moved up sharply this week as Nogales shippers bought heavily in Florida to cover weak production and quality in Mexico. Acreage in Florida is down significantly compared to previous years, which will also keep markets elevated.



CV CELERY

ALERT! **Celery** prices remain ridiculous. Availability in Oxnard, CA is very limited on all sizes, and shippers are prorating heavily. Growers are also fighting quality issues, particularly seeder (where the middle of the bunch sprouts leaves as it's ready to produce seeds).

There are sporadic shots of Mexican **Celery** available, but only naked 24ct is crossing the border. Prices are at historic highs and no relief is expected until Salinas, CA starts in late May.



CV EASTERN PEACHES

The first Eastern **Peaches** pick date is expected for May 1st with light volume but improving quickly. To date, weather has been excellent for **Peaches** with plenty of chill hours.

Overall, the crop is looking good but somewhat lighter than expected through mid-June, then improving.



CV GRAPES

ALERT! We are beginning to see the market on **Green Seedless Grapes** to climb and it will go up fast. Growers are sitting on the better fruit expecting to get a mid to upper 40's dollar range next week.

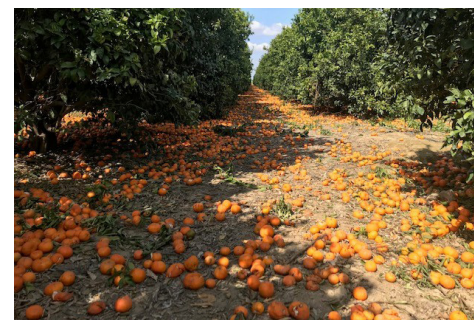
With the strength on the **Green Grapes**, **Red Grapes** have firmed up a bit but are still a great value.



CV ORANGES

Navel Oranges will be in steady and promotable volumes through April. Fruit is peaking on 72s & smaller. There are plenty of bag promotions available.

Cara Cara Oranges are at promotable volumes for Easter, and quality is great.



CV MANDARINS

NOTE: California **Mandarins** (including Halos brand) will be winding down by the end of April.

This is a little earlier than anticipated due to weather and pack out yields.



CV NEW JERSEY VEG

Local New Jersey **Vegetables** are getting started this week! Flaim Farms will be shipping **Spinach** and **Kale**. **Collards** will be available during mid-April.

Stay tuned for more updates on local.



CV POTATOES

The **Russet Potato** market remains steady this week and shippers are reportedly into some very nice quality **Count Russet Potatoes**.



CV BROCCOLI

Promotional volume on **Broccoli Crowns** is expected next week in Salinas, CA. All growers report excellent quality.



CV LETTUCE

Leaf Lettuce is in good supply in Salinas and Santa Maria, CA. **Romaine Lettuce** is expected to firm up later this week.

Iceberg Lettuce has started in Huron, CA and will start in Salinas in mid-April. Quality is good, but box weights are a little lighter than is typical.



CV CUCUMBERS

The Florida **Cucumber** deal is off and running with great volume and quality.

Canadian **Euro Seedless Cucumbers** will be up slightly this week, but pricing is still ad-friendly.

Tray pack **Mini Seedless Cucumbers** are steady this week.



CV ASPARAGUS

Asparagus will continue to be promotable this week but expect prices to start going up as shippers get ready for the Easter holiday demand. Quality continues to be excellent.



CV ONIONS

The **Onion** market remains in some turmoil this week. **Yellow Onions** seem to have leveled off this week on price, however **Red Onions** are expected to really spike in price this week as storage **Onion** supplies are dwindling.

White Onions remain expensive and **Sweet Onions** are pretty steady on price this week out of Mexico.

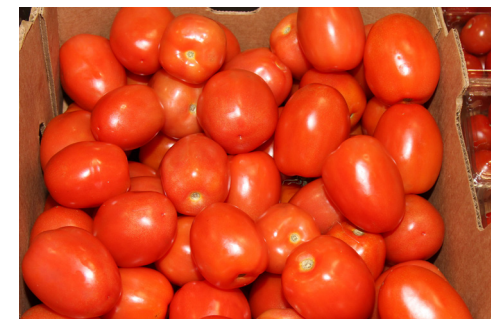
The start of the **Vidalia Sweet Onion** season is anticipated for the end of April, with peak season in May and June.



CV HOthouse TOMATOES

Cluster and **Beefsteak Tomatoes** are still very promotable. Greenhouses in Canada, USA, and Mexico continue to harvest, causing a flush. Quality from Canada and USA continue to impress. Markets are steady.

Campari Tomatoes remain promotable this week as Canadian crops continue to peak. Quality continues to be excellent as prices come off some to push product.



CV FIELD TOMATOES

Roma Tomato prices markets remain very promotable again this week with little to no change. Quality has been excellent from both Mexico and Florida.

Grape Tomatoes are also still very promotable from Florida or Mexico. Quality remains outstanding from Florida.



CV NATURESWEET TOMATOES

NatureSweet **Cherubs** (grape), **Constellation** (rainbow snacking), and **Glorys** (cherry) **Tomatoes** are in steady supply for April.

There will be some spot promos on **Eclipses** (brown), **Twilight** (mini brown), **Sunburst** (mini gold), and new **D'Vines** (cherry on the vine) **Tomatoes** during April.



CV RASPBERRIES & BLACKBERRIES

Raspberries and **Blackberries** are in steady supply out of Mexico, but not yet in the peak we were expecting. Quality has been excellent on both.

NOTE: Yields on **Blackberries** haven't been as consistent as anticipated from Driscoll's, but that should change going forward into late-April.



CV GREEN BEANS

Florida **Green Beans** are at peak quality, especially those in the Clewiston area. We expect excellent supply and quality in Florida to continue through the end of April.