

## OVERVIEW:

The avocado market is facing significant challenges, with tight supply and elevated prices expected to persist. Reduced harvests in Mexico, coupled with increased domestic demand during Lent and a high percentage of grade 2 fruit, are the primary drivers. New USDA packhouse restrictions are adding further pressure to an already strained market, resulting in limited availability and a dominance of smaller fruit sizes. Supply constraints are impacting several leafy green items. Broccoli has been added to the alert list due to limited availability and rising prices. Endive, escarole, cilantro, spinach, bok choy, fennel, and leeks are experiencing ongoing supply shortages, driving market conditions. Aphid pressure is a significant concern for arugula, kale, and cilantro, necessitating close monitoring.

A recent cold front in the desert region has introduced the potential for frost damage and increased insect activity, which could impact production throughout March. The combination of chilly mornings and high winds poses a risk to various commodities. South Florida and regions like Nogales and McAllen are maintaining strong production levels, with the notable exception of tight supplies of Caribe peppers. Roma tomatoes, yellow squash, and green bell peppers are experiencing firmer markets, a trend expected to continue as the western transition from Sinaloa to Sonora progresses. Melon volume and quality are excellent, with robust supplies reported from ports and Nogales. Offshore table grape supply has stabilized and improved. However, banana and pineapple availability remains limited, requiring ongoing flexibility in pineapple sizing due to industry-wide constraints.

## ALERT LIST:

ESCALATED	EXTREME
Asparagus, Avocados, Broccoli, Red Cabbage, Organic Celery, Cilantro, Endive, Escarole, Fresh Herbs, Caribe Peppers, Limes (some sizes), Napa Cabbage, Parsley, Spinach	Bok Choy, Fennel, Leeks,

## WATCH LIST:

Banana, Pineapple, Arugula, Green Cabbage, Cauliflower, Iceberg & Romaine Lettuce, Ginger, Snow Peas, Sugar Snap Peas, Yellow Squash, Eggplant



**Strawberries** – Western US harvests are down due to rain in Santa Maria, impacting size and quality. Improvement expected in March. Mexican production is declining with uneven ripening and smaller sizes. Florida production is stable, with potential for improved quality despite short-term slowdowns. Quality management is ongoing across all regions.



**Blackberries** – Quality is good, but some issues (red cell, calyx, soft fruit) persist. Volume is steady, with a slight dip late February. Organic production ending early.



**Raspberries** – Quality is strong, with minor overripe fruit. Volume peaks through April. Organic supply is steady through March.



**Blueberries** – Mexican conventional production peaks through mid-April, organics are finished. Chilean season ends early due to weather; quality is excellent. Oxnard organic production is increasing, peaking late March. Florida conventional season starts in March, with slight estimate reductions due to weather, but good quality expected.



**Cucumbers – Slicer:** Good supply from Nogales, McAllen, and Honduras. Quality good. **English:** Good supply from Mexico. Quality good.



**Green Onions** – Good supply and quality, but some markets may see light supplies next week.



**Potatoes** – Short-term market stability is expected. Size profiles are balanced, with volume deals fluctuating weekly between 40/50 and 80/90 cartons. Larger sizes are more plentiful. Norkotah supplies will taper off late Q1, transitioning to Burbank potatoes in early Q2. Burbank yields were lower, potentially tightening supply and raising prices. Prices are not expected to decrease.



**Broccoli, Florets & Crowns** – Good supply and quality. Floret Minis are tight.



**Tomatoes** – East Coast round and Roma tomato harvesting is in full swing, but cooler weather may slow production this week. Markets are expected to remain stable for rounds and firm up slightly for Romas. Quality is excellent. Snacking tomato supplies are lighter, and higher demand has increased FOB pricing; quality remains good. Mexican round and Roma tomato harvesting is also in full swing, with similar weather impacts and market expectations as the East Coast. Tomato on the vine volume is steady.



**Broccolini/Sweet Baby Broccoli** – Supply is very limited, prices are rising due to increased demand and cooler temperatures.



**Chili Peppers** – Supplies good overall, except Caribes are short.



**Avocados** – Prices are up. This uncertain market requires agile supply management. Weekly volume dropped to 44M pounds (25% less) from 59M. California rain will further reduce harvest. Week 12 should see increased volume. Season estimate: 355M pounds, similar to last year. April-September will bring steady volumes, initially smaller sizes (48s and under). Mexican dry matter: ~33%.



**Melons (Cantaloupe/Honeydew)** – Pricing is settling. Cantaloupe quality is excellent, with good color and consistent brix (13–15%). Sizing peaks on 9s, then jumbos, then 12s. Honeydew production from Honduras is declining after a peak, but new arrivals are expected by Friday with brix levels around 12–14%. Volume for both may decrease later in the month due to Easter retail demand.



**Asparagus** – Mexican production is strong, Peruvian season ended. Quality is high, with consistent large and jumbo sizing.



**Artichokes** – Good supply and quality.



**Corn** – Stable supply and good quality from Mexico and Florida.



**Parsley** – Good supply and quality, but pricing is high.



**Green, Red & Napa Cabbage** – Green: Good supply and quality. Napa: Improving supply and quality, but insect pressure present. Red: Limited supply, high pricing in some markets.



**Cauliflower** – Good supply, but some reports of weak texture and mechanical damage.



**Fennel** – Supply shortage, pricing is high.



**Kale** – Improved supply and quality, but insect pressure is a concern.



**Bell Peppers** – Supply light for Green, but overall good supply for other colors all in Nogales and South Florida. Quality mostly good.



**Onions** – Pacific Northwest storage onions (white and red) are expected to see price increases in early Q1. White supplies are light, and relief from Mexico is expected mid-Q1. Red onions will likely remain elevated until California's spring/summer harvest. Mexico's crop is projected to be healthy, stabilizing the market. Texas crop predictions are premature; weather events could cause price spikes late Q1.



**Bok Choy** – Limited supply drives high market prices. Quality is good.



**Lettuce, Iceberg & VA Blends** – Supplies and quality are good, but heat stress is causing pinking and potential internal burn. VA: Quality and supplies good.



**Lettuce, Romaine & VA Blends** – Supplies good. Organic Romaine Hearts are pricier due to frost damage. VA: Quality and supplies good.



**Lettuce, Red & Green Leaf** – Quality and supplies good.



**Leeks** – Very limited supply, pricing is high.



**Spinach** – Good supply and quality, but reports of weak texture, discoloration, wilting, and insect damage.



**Pineapple** – Supply remains tight until late February, peaking in May. Size flexibility needed.



**Ginger** – Stable supply and market.



**Carrots** – Desert region supplies are good with excellent quality, expected to remain steady through late April/early May.



**Celery** – Good supply and quality. Organic celery supply is low.



**Brussel Sprouts** – Good supply and quality.



**Lemons** – California has good supply and quality, ideal for promotions.



**Limes** – Small size pricing is up due to increased demand and better weather. Oil spots and breakdown from past rains are still present. Smaller sizes dominate, large sizes scarce through Q1.



**Mandarins/Grapefruit/Specialties** – California Mandarins, Grapefruit, Cara-Cara, and Blood Oranges are of very good quality.



**Oranges** – California quality is excellent, supply is good. Small sizes (113s, 138s) pricing is firming, overall market stable.



**Eggplant** – Domestic supply light with mixed quality. Mexican supply good with excellent quality.



**Watermelon** – Seedless watermelon prices are rising due to decreased fruit from Guatemala and Mexico. Demand exceeds supply.



**Mushrooms** – Stable supply and good quality.



**Snow Peas & Sugar Snaps** – Guatemalan supply is strong, but vessel delays are possible. Prices are down. Mexican production is steady.



**Bananas** – Imports are low but improving. Tropical weather and logistics caused recent supply issues. Minor pro-rates expected. Quality is good despite winter. Monitor ripeness due to fast inventory turnover.



**Table Grapes** – Stable supply of white, red, globe, and black varieties from Peru and Chile. Quality is good.



**Garlic** – California garlic has good quality, but supply is light.



**Green Beans** – Excellent supply from Nogales and Florida. Quality good.



**Zucchini/Yellow Squash** – Good volume and quality on Italian zucchini. Yellow squash supply is shorter.



**Fresh Herbs** – Basil quality and supply have improved, but imported chervil remains limited. Tarragon faces ongoing supply challenges from low yields in Colombia and Mexico, with limited availability expected for several weeks. Overall herb conditions should improve in two to three weeks as temperatures stabilize. Arugula and cilantro supplies are limited due to frost damage, resulting in quality issues and some growers implementing prorating.