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The Produce Press

A Weekly Word From Washington Produce

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Important Money Saving Strategies and Tips

Whether it is in a place of business or at home, we are all looking for ways to save money. Finding ways to do this on products you *need* to buy everyday may not always be obvious at first glance. In today's economy, this is increasingly important. If you listen to or read the news, you cannot miss the obvious signs that the economy is slowing. The restaurant industry may be notably effected since the average consumer may make the choice this year to reduce their spending on eating out.

We at Washington Produce are working hard to improve our purchasing decisions and establish even better relationships with our vendors in order to bring you the same great quality products at better prices. We believe that there are certain things that *you* can do to improve the efficiency of both your operation as well as ours. When our purchasing and order delivery cycle is more efficient, we pass on our cost savings to our customers. The steps that are discussed below are good practices during any kind of economy. But right now, we feel that this is the perfect time to review and implement them in your operation.

Don't Wait Too Late To Order

Washington Produce accepts same-day orders but strongly encourages you to order the day before you wish to receive delivery. Planning ahead and ordering the day or night before gives you enough time to calmly review your inventory and make the right purchasing decision. This also helps us at Washington Produce make better purchasing decisions as well each night with our vendors. This ensures enough fresh supply of products for our customers and timely delivery in the morning.

Order Online

Washington Produce gives you several ways to place your order. However, we encourage you to use the internet whenever possible. When you use our web site, your order goes directly into our computer systems. This reduces or eliminates the ambiguity that is sometimes associated with phone-in orders. Our web site can also send you an order confirmation via email so that you can make sure that the right items and quantities were received by our systems. If you are not able to use the internet, we can provide you customized order guides or you to full out and send to us via fax. These order guides include all items you normally order along with the full descriptions and item codes. Whether you use our web site or use our custom order guide fax forms, you can help us increase our efficiency, reduce errors, and ultimately open the door to more cost-cutting measures for you.

Look Into Alternative Products

There may be certain products that are not the absolutely best quality but are still perfectly acceptable for your use. Use them and you will see immediate cost savings. You might find it more efficient to purchase pre-cut veggies as opposed to cutting them yourself. Also, there may be products you do not currently use which could be cheaper yet do the trick just as well. Call us — we are always happy to discuss this topic with you.

Increase Your Product Shelf Life

Use the storage and refrigeration tips we discussed in two recent issues of The Produce Press. You can extend the shelf life of your inventory by following a few simple steps. If you have not received the two issues containing these articles, we would be glad to email, fax, or drop off some copies for you. Just let anybody at Washington Produce know.

Know Your Busy Periods

Understanding busy periods, holidays, and other special times has always been crucial in any restaurant or catering establishment. Being blindsided with a sudden increase in business is great for business but it can be a very stressful experience. Being able to perform a good forecast of the products and quantities that you need for these periods goes a long way towards proper inventory levels and ultimately a reduction in cost.

Latest Market Report & News *As of May 12th 2008*

Vegetables

Asparagus	Jazz, Pippin, Fuji, Sonya, Rome, Spartan, and others are available as well as more commonly used varieties. Prices are low.
Blue Lake Green Beans	California crop is starting. Quality is good. Price is a bit high
Broccoli	Price is low on crowns. Quality is good.
Cauliflower	Price is average. Quality is good.
Celery	Prices have increased dramatically over the last week.
Cabbage	Price is average. Quality is good.
Carrots	Price is average. Quality is good.
Cucumbers	Price is average. Quality is good.
Eggplant	Early California crop is very high. Mexican crop is still available at a cheaper price.
Lettuce	All lettuce varieties are at a low price. Quality is good.
Tomatoes	Price is average. Quality is good on most varieties. Cherry tomatoes quality is below average.
Onions	New crop has started, still light skin. Prices are low.
Peppers	Red and yellow bells are very high. Price for green bells is reasonable.
Squash	Zucchini price is low. Straight neck yellow squash is reasonable. Quality is good on all varieties.

Fruits

Apples and Pears	No change in price. Good supply and excellent quality.
Avocados	Price is average price on decent California quality.
Berries	Blueberries are very high but price is coming down. Raspberries are a bit high. Regular quality blackberries are low but Driscolls are high.
Citrus	Lemons are still high but came down a bit very recently. Oranges have increased a bit but are still low. Limes have come down a bit and are at a reasonable price.
Grapes	Chilean grapes season is winding down. We are waiting for local supply. Price is a bit high for good quality Chilean.
Melons	Price for cantaloupe and honeydews is average. Watermelons are coming down. Bins are now available.
Stone Fruits	California supply is available and price will start dropping in the days and weeks to come.
Bananas	Bananas are very high due to weather conditions. Quality is good.