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Mango volume should be heavy this summer

By Andy Nelson
Markets Editor

Very large volumes of Mexican mangoes will likely continue well into June, but importers and industry officials hope that improving quality will keep fruit moving and prices stable.

Weekly crossings in the second half of May were at or near record levels, with product coming in from multiple growing regions, said Luis Diaz, salesman for Diazteca Co., Nogales, Ariz.

During the week of May 17, for example, about 2.6 million cases were imported from Mexico, a record, Diaz said. That's up from 1.7 million cases in 2009 and 1.1 million in 2008. A typical total for that time of year is about 1.5 million cases, he said.

About 236 million pounds of Mexican mangoes were imported to the U.S. the following week, up from 148 million pounds last year at the same time, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Year-to-date shipments, however are down because of the season's late start. Through May 29, about 1.89 billion pounds had been shipped, down from 2.11 billion last year at the same time.

With volumes set to increase from northern Mexico, supplies would stay heavy for the foreseeable future, he said.

"There's a lot of fruit out there, and with Sinaloa coming on strong, it's not going to slow down," Diaz said.

William Watson, executive director of the Orlando, Fla.-based National Mango Board, agreed.

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'We're hearing there's a lot more fruit coming out of Mexico

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William Watson
National Mango Board

more fruit coming out of Mexico than last year, and we anticipate there will be more as we continue through the season," Watson said.

"Almost every producing region is going at once."

Volumes won't likely start to taper off and markets to strengthen until the second half of June, said Chris Ciruli,



Ciruli

a partner in Nogales-based Ciruli Bros. LLC.

As heavy as supplies have been, they could get actually get heavier in the first half of June, Ciruli said.

"I think we'll see it get bigger before it gets smaller," he said.

Volumes out of Sinaloa should be especially heavy, in

Mangoes B4 ►

Mangoes

From B1

large part because of a storm two years ago, Watson said. The storm stressed trees so much, last season they were in recovery mode, he said. This year, they're coming back with a vengeance.

"They really recovered, and now they're really producing," he said.

On June 1, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported prices of \$3-4 for one-layer car-

tons of tomy atkins 6-8s from Mexico, down from \$4-5 last year at the same time. Ataulfos 12s were \$7-10, comparable to \$7-9 last year at the same time.

Late May pricing was sluggish, with 12s and 14s selling for as low as \$2.50, Diaz said, but even with supplies expected to remain strong, he hoped that the better quality expected out of Sinaloa would help buoy markets.

"Sinaloa might save prices with good quality," he said. "The quality there looks very good. In Nayarit and Michoa-

can there's no quality."

That's largely the result of persistent rains during the growing season in southern Mexico, Diaz said.

Watson said that despite the high volumes, fruit was moving at a pretty good clip in late May, which boded well for June.

"If you look at volume and price compared to last year, price is off a little bit but not much," he said, adding that volumes are much higher this year. "That tells us that a lot of those mangoes are finding homes."