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## **The Onion House expects solid Texas spring deal**

By

Tim Linden

March 10, 2023

The onion marketing situation seems to be lining up well for the start of the Texas spring onion deal as some of the competitive production areas are close to clearing out their supplies, leaving a supply void to be filled by Rio Grande Valley production.



At least that's the view of Don Ed Holmes, owner and president of Weslaco's [The Onion House](#) and a longtime veteran of the Texas onion deal. "We keep on hearing that Idaho and Oregon are getting ready to finish up," he said on the last day of February. "And Mexico is 2,000 loads ahead of their onion shipments compared to this same day last year. That tells me they are going to be short on the back end of their deal."

Perfect growing conditions in Texas for the past couple of months have moved the Texas production up a bit, which Holmes believes will turn out to be a good thing this season. He noted that about 100 acres of early Rio Grande Valley production has already been harvested but the bulk of the volume will still come to market in April. "We typically like to harvest beginning April 1, but this year it looks like we are going to get started around March 25, which will work out this year," he said.

Going into March, Holmes said the FOB price on 50-pound sacks from Mexico was in the \$10-\$12 range, which is a level at which growers can make money. He said as March proceeds and volumes decline from both Mexico and the U.S. storage deals, the FOB price should climb to a good level for Texas product.

"We expect yields to be up, and we know we have a little more acreage down here, so we are expecting a good season," he said, reiterating that the growing season has been ideal. "We have had adequate moisture with no weather situations that hurt the crop. We are expecting very good quality."

He added that it also appears that the tail end of the Texas deal will face favorable marketing conditions as cold weather in both California's Imperial Valley and Georgia's Vidalia district points to later starts than usual. Texas could have a clear runway to market its onion crop into May.

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As far as The Onion House is concerned, Holmes said he will have a good crop of both red and yellow onions from Texas in April and will augment that with some production of white onions and organic onions from Mexico. “We have a new grower in Mexico with an unbelievable white onion that is absolutely on par with Nevada whites,” he said. “We will be marketing them under the new ‘Laguna Diamonds’ label. They will start around April 1 and we will have them into late April. It is a superior product.”

As that grower’s crop winds down The Onion House will transition to another white onion producer who harvests his onions in the Chihuahua district under the El Roble label and will have production into mid-May. “That’s also a good onion,” said Holmes, noting that he no longer grows white onions in south Texas as it is difficult to produce that perfect white color.

The Onion House also has access to organic onions through another Mexico grower and will have volume from mid-March through April.

“Other than that, everything is the same for us,” Holmes said. “We have the same sales group doing the same good job.”

[Tim Linden](#)

About Tim Linden |



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Tim Linden grew up in a produce family as both his father and grandfather spent their business careers on the wholesale terminal markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Tim graduated from San Diego State University in 1974 with a degree in journalism. Shortly thereafter he began his career at The Packer where he stayed for eight years, leaving in 1983 to join Western Growers as editor of its monthly magazine. In 1986, Tim launched Champ Publishing as an agricultural publishing specialty company.

Today he is a contract publisher for several trade associations and writes extensively on all aspects of the produce business. He began writing for The Produce News in 1997, and currently wears the title of Editor at Large.

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