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with Eric Patrick



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Freight Forward: A deep dive into spring and summer logistics for fresh produce

By

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As the vibrant colors of spring blossom and summer's warmth beckons, the logistics behind fresh produce enter a frenzied tempo across the nation. We are witnessing it firsthand here on the West Coast, as fresh produce peaks transition from California's Imperial Valley and Arizona's Yuma Valley to the Salinas region for leafy vegetables and more.



The current demand for transportation falls short of available freight capacity, but the situation can change rapidly. Soon, trucks will be in much higher demand, especially with other highly perishable products like California cherries, which have just started entering the market the last full week of April and the central California strawberry season is now in full swing. The estimate is we will see price increases for trucking in the 5 to 8 percent range.

Now's the time to plan for a successful transportation season during these peak months. In the produce industry, every season and year is unique, with many players involved. Do not assume that everyone is aware of this year's harvest schedule for your crops; you need to communicate it clearly. Someone in the communication chain will undoubtedly seek the most current crop timings, and if you

provide this information, you will be in a position of advantage.

In the Pacific Northwest, for example, discussions about cherry timing and the Fourth of July celebrations have already begun, even though harvest is weeks away. With major holidays such as Memorial Day approaching in May, it is crucial to align your crop schedules with your trucks, customers and consumers. Remember, these holidays generate demand beyond your specific items; for instance, Mother's Day set the stage for strawberry promotions — but think how fresh strawberries also ties to whipped cream and sponge cake, and you start grasping the larger picture.

The goal is perfect alignment for successful promotions, as missed holiday timings mean lost opportunities that cannot be regained. Effective communication within your team is essential throughout this process.

Every truck, every shipment, plays a critical role in delivering nature's bounty to our tables, ensuring that freshness and flavor are never compromised.

As we brace for the impending rush, think about the details you need to have your most successful season, and make sure you're providing those same details to your partners in transportation.

Eric Patrick is a seasoned marketing director within the [GrubMarket](#) family, bringing over two decades of experience in the fresh produce industry and logistics. He's also an adjunct marketing instructor at Yakima Valley College. He appreciates the importance of logistics and how it impacts industries every day.

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