

# Preparing for January



how many bin navels Crosset will sell this year. It will surprise you. Cost of imported fruit should be reasonable, and grapes especially require large displays. Depending on supplies, strawberries will continue to sell, don't forget about them. Everyone will be on a diet so please maintain those value-added sections, it will pay large dividends.

**Vegetables** usually are higher in cost with overall quality somewhat lessened resulting from the growing areas. The New Year Dieter comes to produce for low calorie offerings and we have many to sell them. We must maintain those relish tray items and variety lettuces. I hope everyone will remind their crews about how important it is to condition all the leafy greens. That would make a great "New Year's Resolution". Too many stores take product from box to shelf. Ask your merchandiser how that creates shrink.

**Refrain from giving the department** the exact same look every week and sales will blossom. Changing the department around creates excitement and generates sales. Approach every customer with 'Help you find something'? This will grow sales and keep customers.

**New items in January** are imported stone fruit, strawberries, California apples and pears, temple oranges, asparagus, honey tangerines, cantaloupes, honeydews, fruit mangoes, cherries and Minneola's. Use Crosset's weekly addition/deletion item sheet as a tool to keep you informed.

**New Year's Selling** - The one key factor to remember about merchandising for New Year's is that most activities are centered around parties or entertaining. Meals are not full sit-down, but typically are light with considerable hors d'oeuvres. New Year's is also the start of the "dieting season". Make your nut category noticeable as an opportunity to clean up on inventory. Many customers still classify them as healthy and an alternative to sweets.

**Vegetables** - All relish tray items need heavy emphasis. Those would include, but not be limited to the following: peppers, cucumbers, radishes, mushrooms, green onions, asparagus, parsley, variety lettuce, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, celery, celery hearts, celery sticks, cauliflower, broccoli, jicama, carrots, carrot sticks, baby carrots, etc. Cost on most of these items is small for carry over, opposed to losing customers. Tying in displays with veggie dips is critical. Convenience trays with cut-up prepared vegetables and party trays will sell well so maintain a full selection and keep them fresh. Don't forget to keep an eye on red potatoes.

**Fruit** - Lemons and limes always go well for those party time drinks so have extra on hand this time of year. Party tray fruits will get most of the fruit sales. They include, but are not limited to, the following: kiwi, strawberries, melons, oranges, clementine's, cuties/halos, apples, pineapple, mangos, papaya, bananas, etc. Fruit dip and fruit dip recipes are sure winners for New Year's. The large jar of Kraft Marshmallow Crème usually has a recipe for a fruit dip on the back. Party trays with cut-up fruit will have strong movements and require a large display. Also, consider some two-quart or larger cut-up mixed fruit/berry bowl containers to cover the party needs of the bigger festivities.

The week between Christmas and New Year's is usually slow and you won't sell a lot of fruit or vegetables until a day or two just before New Year's Day, then you'll wonder where all the customers came from. It is a challenge not to run out of those relish tray items knowing sales drop dramatically after New Year's. Spending quality time on orders is a must.

January is the month you really have to promote for sales!! So go for it!!!

## Recipes (Source: Allrecipes)

### TACO DIP

**Ingredients:**

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (16 ounce) container nonfat sour cream
- 1 (1.25 ounce) package taco seasoning mix
- 1/4 head iceberg lettuce - rinsed, dried, and shredded
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 3 chopped tomatoes
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 (2.25 ounce) can black olives, drained



**Directions:**

In a medium-sized mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, sour cream and taco seasoning. Spread this mixture in a 9-inch (or a little larger) round serving dish. Top the mixture with lettuce, Cheddar cheese, tomatoes, bell pepper and black olives.

### BROWN SUGAR SMOKIES

**Ingredients:**

- 1 pound bacon
- 1 (16 ounce) package little smokie sausages
- 1 cup brown sugar, or to taste

**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Cut bacon into thirds and wrap each strip around a little sausage. Place the wrapped sausages on wooden skewers, several to a skewer. Arrange the skewers on a baking sheet and sprinkle them liberally with brown sugar.
3. Bake until bacon is crisp and the brown sugar melted.



## Organic Produce

**BEETS:** Beets will continue to see insect pressure to the tops as well as yellowing that to the tops.

**BROCCOLI:** Post Christmas, we are seeing some great deal pricing and we will be taking advantage of and passing that along to customers. Be on the lookout for Wisebuy and Weekend deals!

**BUNCH CARROTS:** Good supply available and good quality.

**CABBAGE:** Supply is coming on out of Florida from Lady Moon and the quality has been perfect! Costs this year have remained high as the organic Mexican crop we normally see is almost non-existent.

**CAULIFLOWER:** Supply has turned around and we are seeing much better quality. Pricing will continue to come down over the next couple weeks.

**CELERY:** The celery market is very tight to non-existent. We are seeing 100% cuts from all suppliers as Mexican crop has been slow to start due to residual damage from the hurricanes. We will see this continue for the next couple weeks.

**CUCUMBERS:** Regional supply has ended and we are seeing limited supply out of Mexico. We should not see prorates on orders as we are staying ahead on volume.

**GREEN PEPPERS:** Supply has moved to Florida and South Carolina and has looked great!

**KALES:** Great supplies of kale currently, plenty of regional product from all over the Midwest available. We are currently sourcing from Georgia and North Carolina.

**LETTUCES:** We are primarily getting product from Florida (Lady Moon). Quality is amazing and supply is great!

**RADISHES:** Supplies are impacted by weather out west as heat has really affected what supply is available. Product out of Florida is very clean and looks great!

**YELLOW SQUASH & ZUCCHINI:** We are seeing supply tighten up as colder temperatures in Mexico have really limited what we can pick up. Regional supply out of Florida is spotty at best, but we are trying to stay ahead to prevent prorates/cuts.

## Western Vegetables

**BROCCOLI:** Good quality and with great volumes. Now carrying wrapped broccoli.

**CAULIFLOWER:** Good quality and with great volumes.

**CELERY:** Celery numbers are on with forecast projections but with inland celery growers fighting fusarium in the fields, it's putting demand on the coastal farms who are free of the disease.

**ICEBERG LETTUCE:** Strong demand since the Romaine fiasco. No lag in harvest numbers as shippers struggle to keep up with demand; expected to ease after the new year.

**ROMAINE/ROMAINE HEARTS/MIXED LEAF:** Pricing is on the decline but it is not enough to make people switch back or ease pressure on the lettuce demand.

## Value-Added

Improving weather conditions in the southwestern U.S. growing areas is increasing the supply of raw product into the processing plants. While there are still some prorates of various special salad blends, the mainstream items are gradually getting back into good supply.

## Southern Vegetables

**CUCUMBERS & GREEN PEPPERS:** Markets are steady. Product is available from Florida and Mexico; quality is good.

**TOMATOES:** Round and Roma tomato markets are still firm. Big tomatoes are tight due to cold weather.

**YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH:** Markets have firmed up; product available from Florida and Mexico. Quality is good.

## Asparagus

Market continues to active for Holiday pulls. Peru volume dropping off after good volume over last few weeks and Mexico continues to be very light. As on hand inventory is deleted, markets will move upward quickly for New Year's and first weeks of January. Organic asparagus will remain very spotty with sporadic arrivals; next arrival is scheduled for first of the year. Overall asparagus prices will be firm until Peru spikes upward for February.

## Fruits

**APPLES & PEARS:** West Coast: Supplies and quality of apples coming from Washington/California remain good. Now carrying organic Granny 12/2#, organic Pink Lady 12/2#, organic Fuji 12/2#, organic Gala 12/2#, organic Bosc 12/2#, organic Anjou 12/2#, organic Concorde 22#, Ruby Frost 12/2#, Ruby Frost 27#, and Bartlett Pears. Organic Red Starkrimson have finished. Pinata's and Gingergold have been removed from guides. Midwest: Supplies and quality of apples coming from Michigan/Pennsylvania remain good. Now carrying Rome apples 12/3#. New York: Good supplies and quality.

**BLACKBERRIES:** Blackberries volume remains steady and conventional quality has improved. Market pricing is continuing at lower end keeping item as a promotable option. Organic blackberries volume took a dip and quality became and remains spotty. Look for conditions to hold for next few weeks.

**BLUEBERRIES:** Blueberries moving upward in price as overall supply winds down out of Argentina. Peru supply stable but heavy volume pass. Chilean vessels have been making arrivals and is increasing overall volume and stabilized supplies. Chilean blueberry forecasting heavy volume for season and January will be prime month for promotions.

**CANTALOUPE & HONEYDEW:** Cantaloupes currently in very short supply as offshore product is now sole supplying growing region with domestic product totally finished and Mexican/Nogales deal virtually done. Look for little change until the new year. Honeydews mirroring the cantaloupe situation, but better supplies still in Mexico have limited major market shift.

**CHERRIES:** Imported cherries in full swing out of Argentina and with vessel fruit beginning to hit ports the prime import cherry season is here. Quality looks great with good sound color. Rainiers available but stronger costs than Reds but fruit looks great. Both items are high impulse purchases by customers and get out on display to capture these sales.

**CITRUS:** Navel oranges are going strong; fruit quality is very nice. All sizes are now available although navels are peaking on 88/72/113 size. Cara Cara navels, blood oranges and Mineola tangelos are available.

**GRAPES:** Central California Valley grape harvest is continuing to wind down rapidly and with most growers finished packing, California has started recently showing quality issues and move into new crop imported grapes will happen for the coming weeks. New crop import carrying a stronger market cost but will be the more quality driven grape. Organics finishing on all colors except Reds which are still available until first of January, then transition into new crop imports from Peru for the first of January.

**PINEAPPLES:** Steady supplies; market remains down.

**RASPBERRIES:** Volume slipped over last few weeks and market pricing is now reflecting this change; overall quality solid.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Strawberries continue to be very limited with heavy prorates. All areas struggling with cool temperatures and/or rain factoring in. The biggest change is that Central Mexican product is starting to produce some fruit and is providing some relief. Florida remains a very limited option as forecasted rain and cool temperatures will stifle what little production is going. Look for Florida strawberries to remain depressed on supplies well into January.

## Tropical Fruit

**BABY FRENCH BEANS:** Supplies down and costs have moved upward.

**KIWI:** Steady supplies; best quality remains out of New Zealand. Italian kiwi offer is best value.

**LIMES:** Prices has firmed up and increased on some sizes, with better demand this week. Size 200 and large remained limited. Overall quality is very nice.

**MANGOES:** Conventional mangoes primarily out of Ecuador; cost starting to slide. Organic mangoes building volume out of Ecuador and with increased deliveries, market is down and should be at promotion levels shortly.

**MARIDOL PAPAYAS/ GOLD PAPAYAS:** High volume on papayas continues.

**STAR FRUIT:** Good supply; sizing ranging from large 16ct to 25ct for value.

**SUGAR SNAP PEAS/SNO PEAS:** Snow peas market stabilized. Sugar snaps very strong and limited best quality comes out of Peru but at a high price.

## Merchandising Tips

January selling is always a challenge with unpredictable weather and shorter daylight hours. With the Holidays past, but still a recent memory, now is the time to take a look back and review your selling goals, successes and the things you would like to improve in 2019. How was your ordering? Did you let any customers down because you were out of things? Pick the brains of your staff for helping you document any important information for the future.

Make plans to build large sport-themed displays of peanuts and other snacking nuts and tie in with beverages from other departments. College bowl games, pro football playoff games, NCAA basketball games, the National Hockey League and the Super Bowl make the month of January a very active sports month. It can also be a very profitable month.

How is your birdseed display? This is a perfect time of year to capitalize on easy sales. Think BIG and bring in all varieties and include 20-50 bags of 20# birdseed. Talk with your store manager about building a display somewhere near the front of the store. Let your customers know you have it!

Keep fresh bouquets of flowers on display at all times. There's nothing more cheerful during gloomy winter days and nights than fresh flowers in our customer's home. Keep them fresh and do not neglect them.

**CROSSET NEW ITEM & DELETION SHEET**

W/B: 1/6/19

ITEM #	NEW ITEMS	SIZE
33935	Apple Granny OG	12/2#
35060	Apple Pink Lady OG	12/2#
35150	Apple Fuji OG	12/2#
33755	Apple Gala OG	12/2#
38740	Pear Bosc OG	12/2#
38002	Pear Anjou OG	12/2#
38370	Pear Concorde OG	22#
31058	Apple Ruby Frost Pouch	12/2#
31068	Apple Ruby Frost	27#
39055	Navel Orange	7/6#
55055	Gold Nugget Mandarin	20#
39530	Valencia Orange OG	10/4#
55075	Super Nova Mandarin	10/3#
55070	Super Nova Mandarin	25#
	<b>DELETIONS</b>	
89085	Baby Yellow Potatoes	16/1.5#
89049	Mixed Baby Potatoes	16/1.5#
58505	Choice lemon	75ct
69440	Red Seedless Grapes OG	19#
78015	Driscoll Strawberries OG	12/8.8oz
1315	Honeydew	6ct
97415	Pomegranate	30ct
64050	Mango Honey Aulfo	14ct
55025	Darling Clementines	5#
55050	Clementines	10/3#
69219	Grapes Med/Large White	19#
69211	Grapes White Large	19#
69419	Grapes Red Large	19#
69480	Grapes Med/Large Red	19#

