



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Florida's round tomato volume is expected to be lighter for the next week or two, as various growers make the transition from points south to the Palmetto/Ruskin area. Most of what's being harvested this week is coming out of the Estero and Immokalee area, with a mix of crown and 2nds. Good growing weather has kept the quality nice and the sizing profile on the larger side, even on the 2nd picks. Upcoming crops in Palmetto/Ruskin look to have size on them as well. A few growers have already started in a small way with more to come over the next 7-10 days. Roma volumes are light, but steady as some southern crops are still in production and a few growers having started in the Ruskin area. Lipman's romas are on the jumbo and XL side, while other growers have mostly smaller fruit. Availability on grape tomatoes is excellent, as is quality. A few older crops are still in production in southern areas, but most are coming out of Ruskin/Palmetto now.

Mexico continues to provide a steady supply of round and roma tomatoes with mostly good quality. Mainland growers anticipate consistent volumes through April and into early May, which is when the seasonal decline will begin. We are seeing less consistency on roma quality- some lots are excellent and others have challenges- as extreme temperature variances have affected fruit quality in select areas. Although Baja has been putting along with light numbers, Spring roma crops will start next week with rounds to follow by the end of the month, adding to the supply mix. Grape tomato demand is light, allowing the crops currently in seasonal decline to meet demand.

Bell Peppers: South Florida farms continue to provide the East with a light, but steady supply of bell peppers. Growers are working through the last crown picks this week and will continue with later picks as long as market conditions

provide the motivation. Plant City will be the next area to come online, likely next week. Although there are rumors that acreage in this area is down from normal years, this fruit will have to carry the East until Georgia gets up and running in mid-May. There's a decent mix of sizing available and quality has been pretty good. We may see a few minor hiccups in quality over the weekend and into next week since it has rained in the growing areas this week. In the West, Coachella has entered the picture just as Mexico's fruit sizing and quality become more challenging. California is starting to pick up a little steam, as first-to-market growers move deeper into picks and more growers get started over the next few weeks. By the end of the month, Coachella should be the place to go for pepper.

Cucumbers: With Sonora's crops gaining momentum and Baja in first-of-the-season harvests, Western cucumber supply should be good in the coming weeks. The Sinaloa crop will run for another 3-4 weeks, but a few growers are starting to have quality issues and reduced shelf life which could be due to the high heat. Florida's cucumber volume is also strong this week, as several growers work through flushes. With new crops continuing to come online for the next few weeks, supply should remain solid through April.

Summer Squash: With South Florida and Plant City both in solid production this week, there's plenty of squash in the East. We'll see volume dip after next week as most growers in South Florida finish up the season. Weather permitting, Plant City should continue to see good volume for a few more weeks. Yellow squash in both areas has more scarring (about 20%) than most retail customers permit, so Eastern buyers are going West to get the quality. There are a handful of growers in southern Mexico that have small

acreage left, but most of the West's squash production is now centered in the Hermosillo area. Barring any weather issues, supply should be solid for the next few weeks.

Chili Peppers: With Easter right around the corner, chili pepper demand in Mexico's national market is strong especially on poblanos and to a lesser degree on jalapenos. However, most all items are available with nice quality. South Florida growers continue with a trickle of select varieties, but Plant City started its first jalapeno harvests this week. Look for more volume and varieties from this new production area over the next few weeks.

Green Beans: With an abundance of product and market prices below production cost, we are seeing bean growers disk up acreage in South Florida. At this point, there's still plenty of acreage online in South and Central Florida to meet the lackluster demand so there shouldn't be any problems getting through Easter. Weather and depressed markets could become a factor in Eastern availability over the next month, but there's plenty of beans in the ground for the Spring now. The West has plenty of its own beans available to handle market needs. With Guasave crops looking to remain steady for the next few weeks, new crops in Baja, and the California desert about to get underway, the supply outlook is very favorable.

Hard Squash: New Spring sets of hard squash have started in Mexico with very nice quality. Butternuts are lagging behind but should begin to increase over the weekend. Older storage crops are still available, but typical quality concerns are rearing their ugly heads. The East is still looking to Honduras for hard squash. Supply of all three varieties should be available at least through the end of the month with no problem.

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FOOD SAFETY SCOOP

Retailer Audit Demands Nearly Universal for Produce Suppliers

By: Tom Karst, www.thepacker.com, April 5, 2019

Retailers seem to be enforcing tougher produce safety rules than required by government regulations. All nine retailers interviewed by government economists for a recent survey said they require food safety audits of fresh produce suppliers, with some exceptions.

Interviews with nine unnamed retailers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service show they require third-party food safety audits of their suppliers. However, one chain told the USDA it does not apply the audit demand for its smallest suppliers, according to the study.

The report is called "Food Safety Requirements for Produce Growers: Retailer Demands and the Food Safety Modernization Act." It features analysis of interviews with nine food retailers to evaluate food safety requirements for produce suppliers and how they might change in response to the Produce Safety Rule, which began phasing in during January.

"Although third-party audits of food safety practices are commonly demanded by retailers, the produce rule does not require these audits and provides exemptions and variances for smaller growers or particular commodities," the report said.

The authors found it likely that retailers already requiring third-party audits will continue to do so. Responses also indicated retailers will likely continue to impose food safety requirements on growers uniformly, rather than "spend the time and resources to understand and adhere to the nuances of the produce rule's compliance criteria," the report said.

Retailers said they believe the produce rule will not drastically affect their growers but will have the greatest impact on growers outside their supply chains. "Most believe their large suppliers are largely in compliance with the regulation, apart from having to make some relatively minor adjustments," the report said.

Growers who are large enough to be covered by the produce rule but not large enough to supply big retailers may need to make more adjustments to comply with the new food safety regime, retailers indicated.

The nine retailers who were interviewed require audits from their suppliers, according to the report, although one does not apply the requirement to its smallest suppliers. The retailers polled expect to continue to require third-party food safety audits to certify that growers conform to the produce rule.

The report said three retailers interviewed require the same types of audits for all their suppliers, large and small. Another three retailers allow smaller suppliers to use less demanding reviews, according to the report. The remaining retailers obtain food safety certifications from wholesalers, according to the report.

Retailers interviewed said they require audits for all produce and may require more stringent audits for commodities they perceive to carry a greater risk for foodborne illness outbreaks. The Produce Safety Rule does not cover certain commodities rarely consumed raw, such as potatoes and beets, but most of the retailers require audits for these commodities as well.

The report said some of the retailers have lost suppliers in the past when new food safety standards were introduced because of the increased cost of compliance. They expect this may happen again, particularly for their smaller suppliers.

Retailers believe implementation of the produce rule won't drastically affect their growers. "Rather, they expect the produce rule to have its greatest impact on produce growers outside these supply chains (direct-to-consumer sellers, smaller retail suppliers, and other less traditional sellers)," the report said.

Travis Minor, Gerard Hawkes, Edward McLaughlin, Kristen Park, and Linda Calvin wrote the report.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS



*The national diesel average price inched up a penny, moving from \$3.08 to \$3.09 per gallon this week.

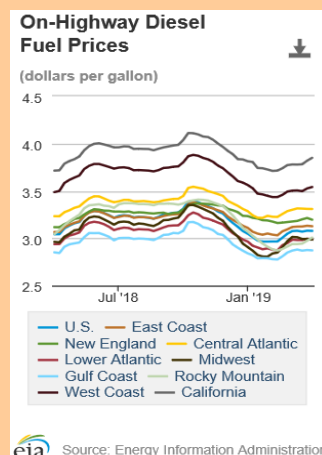
* The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.05 higher than the same time last year.

* Prices rose from \$.01 to \$.06 per gallon in all reporting areas except New England where fuel prices remained stable.

*California continues to have the highest diesel prices in the country at \$3.91 per gallon while the Gulf Coast is the low-price leader at \$2.88 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price rose 2.2% this week, moving from \$62.58 to \$63.98 per barrel.

*Trucks are available in adequate or surplus levels at all shipping points in the country this week.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Albert Janssen- Head Grower/Production Manager Lipman/Huron Produce- Canada

How did you become a part of the Huron/Lipman team?

We immigrated from Holland in 2001 and I was working near Huron at my sister's greenhouse. I wanted to pursue what I always did in Holland, growing crops in a greenhouse, so I applied and was hired by Huron.

What is your favorite aspect of working for Huron/Lipman?

The job that I have is so different every day as plants are telling you a different story every day, I appreciate the freedom that I have even though the job sometimes requires 7 days a week. I know it is challenging but don't really see it as a job but more as something that I really like to do without the 8 to 5 structure.

Tell us about your family.

I am one of nine kids that grew up in a greenhouse family. I have been married for 25 years this year to Judith. We have 1 daughter (Britt) and 2 sons (Stan and Chris). We have a family business at home - a poultry farm, ran mostly by Judith.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in the little town of Poeldijk in The Netherlands. Poeldijk is in "the Westland," the place in the world where greenhouse growing started. I'm very proud to be from there. In the Netherlands we are all fighting with 18 million people for a piece of land, so we thought it was time to move to Canada where there's much more space.

What do you like to do when you aren't working?

I love to play competitive soccer and have since I was 6 years old. I also like just being home on the farm and boating on a nearby lake.

Ideal vacation spot?

Caribbean

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

To help the poor. I really do not like seeing people sleeping on the street

If you were stranded on a desert island, what 3 things would you take with you?

Food, water and a boat to get back home. I don't like being alone.

Do you play any musical instruments or have any other hidden talents?

People say I am a good singer.....



PRODUCE BAROMETER

ITEM	QUALITY	PRICING
Bell Pepper	Good	Steady
Cucumber	Good	Steady
Eggplant	Good	Steady
Green Beans	Good	Steady
Jalapenos	Good	Steady
Onions	Good	Steady
Squash	Fair to Good	Steady
Tomatoes	Good	Steady



APRIL CALENDAR

April All Month

National Florida Tomato Month

April 15th

Tax Day

April 16th

National Stress Awareness Day

April 18th

Get to Know Your Customers Day

April 19th

National Garlic Day

Estero, FL Weather

Fri Apr 12	Sat Apr 13	Sun Apr 14	Mon Apr 15	Tue Apr 16
88°F	88°F	89°F	87°F	87°F
71°F	73°F	73°F	68°F	73°F
SE 7 MPH	SE 10 MPH	SE 16 MPH	SSW 10 MPH	NNE 5 MPH
	Precip 20%		Precip 20%	

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Five Culinary Trends on the Rise with Young Consumers

www.csnews.com, April 3, 2019

CHICAGO — Key food trends today will shape the menus on college campus dining operations in the coming years as younger consumers approach food with a certain criteria. According to Y-Pulse, five food trends — ranging from ethical dining to multicultural menus — are popular among young consumers. The findings come from examining the dining expectations, attitudes, and tendencies of more than 1,000 consumers between 18 and 34 years through multiple comprehensive consumer studies.

The five culinary trends that will have a big impact on college foodservice operations according to Y-Pulse are:

1. Replenishing With Purpose

Young consumers are very interested in the functional aspect of foods that not only satisfy their hunger but also pack a nutritional punch. According to Y-Pulse, 73 percent of overall consumers surveyed said they enjoyed eating superfoods that serve specific functional purposes. Superfoods, such as dried fruits, nuts, and seeds, can easily be integrated into food and beverage concepts. These functional ingredients are also great flavor and textural add-ins to shelf-stable snacks in grab-and-go menus. Young consumers are also extremely responsive to organic foods: 67 percent said that eating organic makes them feel better and 55 percent said that they are willing to pay more for organic menu items.

2. Beyond Dietary Restrictions

Young consumers are no longer interested in highly regimented diets. Instead, the research found, they would like to limit certain ingredients in dishes rather than cut them out completely. By taking a more holistic framework to health, young consumers are receptive to alternative food options. For example, younger consumers admire meat-free lifestyles but are not interested in adopting vegetarian or vegan lifestyles. Young consumers said they admire vegetarian (60 percent) and vegan (56 percent) lifestyles but they also overwhelmingly love meat (82 percent). Only 42 percent of overall consumers said they enjoy eating meat substitutes. It's likely that college campus dining will need to use customization formats to introduce menu items that appeal to those with dietary restrictions, as well as the broader consumer that believes in quality ingredients but not restrictive diets, Y-Pulse said.

3. Ethical Concerns

Today's young consumers between ages 18 and 34 are more aware about ethical issues surrounding food sourcing and production than older generations. More than two-thirds of younger consumers surveyed said there were not enough ethically produced snacks available and 67 percent said would pay more for ethically produced snacks. In addition, 70 percent of young consumers said they care about ordering protein that is sustainably raised or caught. With 63 percent of consumers stating that they consider themselves an advocate for responsibly produced foods, menu ingredient communication is the perfect starting point for campus foodservice operations to open a dialogue about their ethical practices and efforts, according to Y-Pulse.

4. Healthful Without Compromise

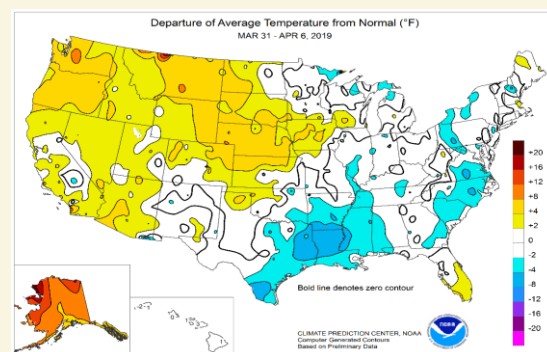
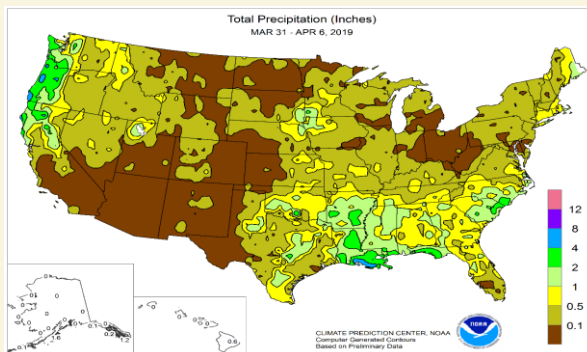
Young consumers want to eat healthy but do not believe in compromising on taste. Specifically, 86 percent said they expect healthy food to taste delicious too. They also want healthy eating to be easy, convenient and work around their on-the-go lifestyle. Eighty-one percent said they shouldn't have to try too hard to eat healthy and three-quarters of them said that they are likely to buy raw fruits and vegetables to eat on-the-go. With 66 percent of consumers saying they don't mind paying extra for a snack if it's a healthy option, the momentum for healthy but delicious grab-and-go foods seems unstoppable, the research firm noted.

5. The Quest for World Flavors

The culinary trend of seeking international flavors is linked to young consumers' interest in discovering vibrant spices and bold flavors. Besides wanting to sample authentic foods that link them to travel, young consumers are also interested in discovering new ways to eat healthy and sustainable foods. Another great pull towards seeking new world flavors is to explore regional cuisine linked to their own ancestry or new immigrant populations. Authenticity is crucial with 79 percent of consumers agreeing that a restaurant's ethnic food should be authentic. From Latin American ingredients to Middle Eastern spices, colleges and universities have a unique opportunity in teaching students about world dynamics by means of food exploration, Y-Pulse added.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

RFG Study: Online Interaction with Supermarkets Continues to Rise

By: Terrie Ellerbe, www.theshelbyreport.com, April 5, 2019

The Retail Feedback Group (RFG), a provider of actionable stakeholder feedback, found in its most recent study that shoppers are interacting with their supermarket in various ways. The 2019 U.S. Supermarket Digital & Social Engagement Study is based on a nationally representative study of 1,200 supermarket shoppers.

Digital interaction with supermarkets strengthening

More than six out of 10 (63 percent) supermarket shoppers interact with their supermarket digitally, up from the 56 percent found in 2017. More than half check a digital circular (55 percent), while smaller percentages are building grocery lists (47 percent), researching special promotions (44 percent), getting recipes (25 percent), getting nutritional advice (11 percent) and reading blogs (9 percent).

Online grocery shopping use varies

Nationally, the results indicate that 12 percent overall are engaging with their supermarket to order groceries online for pickup or delivery. Use varies widely, however, by market area with greater adoption in urban areas (18 percent) versus smaller towns/rural areas (7 percent), as well as generationally with Millennials showing higher use (18 percent) and Boomers much lower use (6 percent).

"Shoppers continue to engage with their supermarket digitally in greater numbers, mainly checking a digital circular, building grocery lists or researching special promotions," said RFG Principal Brian Numainville. "Online shopping, while growing, shows a varied amount of use across different segments. The highest use was found in urban areas or large cities, among Millennials, among larger household sizes of three or more, and among shoppers with household incomes higher than \$100,000."

The impact of social media continues to grow

While 85 percent of shoppers regularly follow one or more social media sites, just 30 percent are friends with/connected to their primary grocery store, up from 25 percent in 2017 but still showing a 55 percent opportunity gap.

Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are the most regularly used channels across all shoppers, while Snapchat and Pinterest also show stronger adoption among Millennials. Further, Millennials show the greatest likelihood to alter behavior, such as purchasing a new food item or shopping at a new store, based on social media recommendations.

In the past year, 41 percent of supermarket shoppers praised or complimented a good experience in a food store on social media, while 22 percent complained. Of those who complained, 42 percent did not get a satisfactory or empathetic response.

"Social media offers an opportunity to open a dialogue with shoppers," said Doug Madenberg, RFG principal. "A large opportunity gap between shoppers using social media channels and connecting with their stores still exists. Especially alarming is the fact that four out of 10 shoppers who complained about a poor experience in their supermarket on social media did not receive a satisfactory or empathetic response. This finding presents an opportunity area for retailers to examine more closely, as every opportunity to address an issue for a shopper should be taken seriously."

Grocery retailers and food distributors may obtain a free copy of the full report or request an interview/presentation of the results from the principals of Retail Feedback Group by emailing report@retailfeedback.com.

FRESH
TOMATOES



the best of nature™

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

PACK YOUR BAGS!

April 25-27, 2019

Viva Fresh Expo
JW Marriott
San Antonio, TX
www.vivafreshexpo.com
Come see #TeamLipman at booth #64!

May 1-2, 2019

PMA Tech Knowledge
Hyatt Regency
Monterey, CA
www.pma.com/events

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