



MARKET UPDATE

Round Tomatoes: Florida's volume is a bit lighter this week as production makes the transition from South Florida to the Ruskin/Palmetto area. Lipman will continue harvesting in Estero for another 1-2 weeks but is also up and running in Duette (Ruskin area). Fruit quality is very nice. Most of the other players in the industry have either completely transitioned to R/P, abandoning the later picks from South Florida crops, or are waiting for their new P/R fields to get up and running. Some will start next week so overall volume should see a boost over the next 7-10 days. Mexico's seasonal decline is underway, creating lighter supply and smaller sizing. At this point, quality is still holding up, but may decline over the next few weeks. The next areas of Western tomatoes on tap are the CA desert, which will start mature green harvests in the next 10-14 days, and Baja which won't come into vine-ripe volume until early June.

Roma Tomatoes: As with rounds, Florida romas are transitioning to Ruskin/Palmetto. Lipman will continue to harvest our Crimson variety romas at the Estero farm for another few weeks but will also move up to R/P. Overall volume is steady, but light, as is normal for this time of year due to the planned influx of Mexican product. Quality has been excellent. Mexico's roma numbers have been shy this week as growers had backed off fields due to a lack of market in recent weeks and new acreage has been slow to come on. Next week should bring some new crop fruit from Sonora which will help volume and quality as well as bring larger sizing to the mix. Baja could see a grower or two begin to scrap pick next week, but we don't expect significant volume from the area for 2 more weeks.

Grape Tomatoes: Florida growers harvested a few more grapes this week as foodservice demand has begun to return. Growers are still picking from mostly newer plantings so quality continues to be very nice. Mexico's current growing areas are in the seasonal decline but volume has been relatively steady this week from several different areas. Look for the Mainland deal to wind down and production to transition to Baja in mid-May.

Bell Peppers: Bell peppers look to be very snug in the East for the next few weeks. South FL growers are winding down any remaining crown picks and the Plant City area has been slow to get going. Early yields have been light and there's less acreage in the ground so we won't have the volume that sometimes comes from this area. GA is still 3-4 weeks out. Mexico's supply continues to lighten up as they near the end of the season although sporadic volumes of mostly smaller fruit will continue for a few weeks. For larger bells, the West has moved into the CA desert where 3-4 growers have gotten off to a light start on the early blocks. The fruit is nice and we should begin to see more volume soon. However, there are less players in that area than in years past so the numbers aren't expected to match up to previous years.

Cucumbers: Both South FL and Plant City are harvesting cucumbers this week, providing the East with lighter but fairly steady supply. South FL has another 2 weeks to go and Plant City will hang on for another week or so after that. GA may scrap a few before, but the 2nd week of May is the estimated date for significant volume. Weather and markets permitting, it looks like there won't be a gap during this year's transition. As for the West, there's plenty of nice-quality fruit available. Sinaloa is still going with good volume and northern Mexico continues to pick up the pace as they move further into new crops. Baja is also up and running already, so we should experience a smooth seasonal transition in the West as well.

Green Beans: Most green bean crops in South Florida are finished up now, which is a little earlier than usual. Production is primarily in central Florida this week, but the numbers aren't strong. With another 10-14 days until north FL/ GA gets rolling, Eastern supply could remain snug for the short term. The West has two spots to choose from for beans: Nogales and the CA desert. New fields are underway in Mexico and more volume is expected to come through Nogales next week.

Summer Squash: There's less squash in Florida this week as growers moved out of older fields due to quality issues.

A few growers have started in GA and more will come online over the next 2 weeks. Quality has been stronger on the zucchini than yellow, but yields have been lighter than expected on both colors. In the West, market fluctuations have put Sonora, Mexico growers in a stop and go production mode with squash. When markets are low, they walk away from fields. As prices increase, they have tried to go back in when possible. This has caused overall volume to decline and availability has become tighter as the week has progressed. However, we do anticipate a bump in production next week as a 6-8 day pattern of very warm temperatures moves into the area.

Eggplant: Western eggplant is in short supply as production transitions to the CA desert. There's very little product coming from the older fields in Mexico and quality issues are common. The CA desert has pushed off its planned start date and is now looking for a few growers to start late next week and others to delay until the following week. With very little remaining in South Florida and just a few starting in Plant City, the East is also in short supply of eggs. We don't expect a big influx of volume until GA has product which will be later in May.

Chili Peppers: There are three different areas in Mexico shipping chilies so availability has been fairly good on all varieties except serranos. Serrano availability will improve as we move into next week's new Sonora crops but could remain relatively snug for several weeks. Baja is up and running in a small way with only poblanos so far, but the initial quality is excellent. Quality varies by area and variety with next week's heat expected to take a toll on the older crops in Sinaloa.

Organic Cucumbers: Good volumes of organic cucumbers are coming off daily and quality is nice.

Organic Green Bells: Organic green bells remain very snug as Mexico crops begin to wind down with smaller fruit and less volume. CA has started in a very light way and should contribute more to the cause over the next few weeks.

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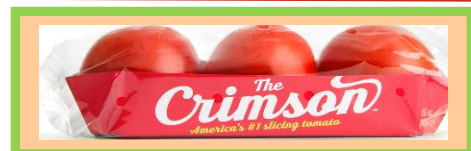
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RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

How to Ensure Meaningful Experiences When Dining Rooms Reopen

By: Matt Brown, www.qsrmagazine.com, April 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has fueled a surge in takeout and food delivery options across the restaurant industry, underscoring the tremendous value of these offerings. However, when the time comes to reopen dining rooms and emerge from our homes, it's expected consumers will seek out safe, trustworthy experiences and opportunities to reconnect with the places and people they have missed.

Before stay-at-home orders issued throughout the country, we conducted a nationwide survey of more than 1,000 U.S. consumers to assess their preferences around restaurant dining options. It found that two in three Americans preferred dining in restaurants (62 percent) over takeout or delivery (34 percent). However, the situation quickly changed as restaurants closed their dining rooms, and delivery and take-out have become a staple for consumers looking to support local businesses, while clinging to a sense of normalcy and comfort through food from their favorite restaurants.

A New Day for Quick-Service Restaurants

When we emerge from this unprecedented time, it's expected that consumers will once again seek out the in-person experiences they once cherished. However, to take advantage of this innate desire to reconnect with the world, it will be incredibly important for restaurants to re-establish trust with consumers still leery of spreading the virus.

It won't be enough to put out a message saying, "It's fine to come back now." It may not even be enough to simply follow local government-imposed guidelines. Instead, put added precautions in place to prevent future spread of the virus to show employees and consumers that you planned for and prioritized their well-being, even while closed. This includes the important steps necessary to ensure a clean and sanitized environment.

Whether your location was exposed to the virus or not, here are ways to provide extra assurances that you implemented unprecedented processes to sanitize the premises:

Clean rigorously and daily. Non-toxic, non-corrosive and FDA/EPA-approved virus-killing sanitizers should be applied to all high-touch areas and surfaces.

Sanitize the restaurant. Start at the back of the house, and move to the front of the house. In other words, begin at the kitchen and move to the dining area, front entrance, then outside the building. Focus on high-touch, high-demand areas like door handles and credit card readers.

Prepare to adjust seating and queuing areas. Ongoing precautions and social distancing guidelines may require more separation between guests, in both the dining and ordering/pick up areas—not to mention it may make customers feel more comfortable. Plan accordingly to ensure increased spacing between diners.

Prioritize employee hygiene. Make sure employees understand the role they can play in helping to stop future spread of the virus by practicing more stringent hygiene. Regular handwashing and use of hand sanitizer or gloves should continue to be used in the workplace.

Check equipment. Restart equipment that has been left idle during the shutdown, and prepare teams and crews to do thorough equipment checks. Plan for unexpected repairs and maintenance before re-opening.

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TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*For the 15th week in a row, the National Diesel Average price fell, moving from \$2.51 to \$2.48 over the past seven days.

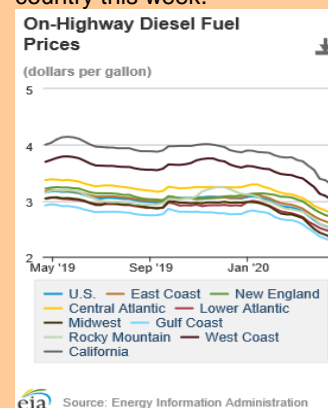
*The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.67 lower than the same time last year.

*All regions of the country reported price declines ranging from \$.01-\$.06 per gallon. The West Coast and California had the most significant drops of \$.06 and \$.05 per gallon, respectively.

*As usual, California has the highest price at \$3.25 per gallon while the Gulf Coast remains the low-price leader at \$2.27 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price actually went negative earlier in the week but has rebounded to \$13.78 per barrel. This is down 30.6% from the prior week's \$19.87 price tag.

*With the exception of a slight shortage in Central and South Florida, adequate transportation is available for fresh produce throughout the country this week.





CHEF'S CORNER

Contributed By: Wil Wilbur

Lipman's Manager of Culinary Development

Let's Talk Pico de Gallo!

Pico is known as a chunky style salsa topping commonly used in Mexican cuisine consisting of chopped tomatoes, onions, serrano or jalapeno peppers, salt, pepper, lime juice, cilantro and a touch of cumin. The beauty of pico, is that it can be customized many different ways to fit your taste preferences, the meal you're serving and even the heat level that people can tolerate.

Traditional jalapenos can get more spicy during the summer months (as with many peppers), and can be more mild during the winter months. If more heat is desired, think of adding serrano, fresno or habanero chilies in small amounts in addition to the jalapeno peppers. If less heat is desired, try substituting poblano peppers in for the jalapenos!

Traditionally savory, pico can be transformed into a sweet-savory blend by adding a fruit component for additional flavor, color and uses. The balance of sweet-heat can also be implemented here as a salsa component to many dishes. Strawberry and pear add subtle sweetness while taking pineapple or peaches and caramelizing them with the onions can make pico seem like it could be used on ice cream for dessert!

Just like any cooking, take the base idea and put your own unique twist on it. Utilizing fresh produce in different ways to change up a meal will impress anyone from your kids to dinner party guests. Be on the lookout for the May NewsBites to see what fun & unique ideas we have to inspire innovation in your kitchen!



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PRODUCE BAROMETER

| ITEM | QUALITY | PRICING |
|-------------|---------|---------|
| Bell Pepper | Good | Steady |
| Cucumber | Good | Steady |
| Eggplant | Varied | Steady |
| Green Beans | Good | Higher |
| Jalapenos | Good | Lower |
| Onions | Good | Lower |
| Squash | Good | Steady |
| Tomatoes | Good | Higher |



APRIL CALENDAR

All Month

Fresh Florida Tomato Month

Physical Wellness Month

April 25th

National Zucchini Bread Day

National Telephone Day

April 28th

Occupational Safety & Health Day

April 30th

National Raisin Day

Ruskin, FL Weather

| Sat Apr 25 | Sun Apr 26 | Mon Apr 27 | Tue Apr 28 | Wed Apr 29 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | |
| 88°F | 86°F | 85°F | 88°F | 89°F |
| 74°F | 67°F | 64°F | 68°F | 74°F |
| S 14 MPH | W 10 MPH | N 9 MPH | ENE 6 MPH | SE 9 MPH |
| Precip 50% | Precip 40% | | | |

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS...Continued

How to Ensure Meaningful Experiences When Dining Rooms Reopen

By: Matt Brown, www.qsrmagazine.com, April 2020

Every detail matters. Those who put forethought into the details are likely to see improved guest results. For example, consider whether restroom hand dryers will be acceptable in a post COVID world, or will guests expect paper towel dispensers? Will customers demand contactless payment options? How will you ensure soda fountains are sanitized? Will diners still be allowed to select their own utensils? And will you need to install sneeze guards at order and pay stations? The list goes on!

Once you've addressed each of these areas, communicate with confidence that the facility is continuously disinfected from top to bottom and that you've considered all elements of the restaurant to ensure that employees and consumers are ready to navigate through this next phase of reconnecting.

The Experience is What Brings Us Back

The findings from the survey we conducted before the pandemic—which were surprisingly consistent across all demographic groups—suggested that people prefer their meals to be memorable events. This likely will not change, but memorable moments now go beyond what the food tastes like.

At the end of the day, the experience will still remain the defining factor for consumers. While the thresholds may have shifted slightly, the building blocks for great experiences will continue to be food quality, consistency, atmosphere (which includes cleanliness), convenience and waitstaff.

Vixxo found that prior to the pandemic, while roughly half (51 percent) of consumers selected their favorite restaurant based on the menu options, 38 percent said that it's the overall experience at an establishment—including atmosphere, employees and convenience—that makes it their favorite.

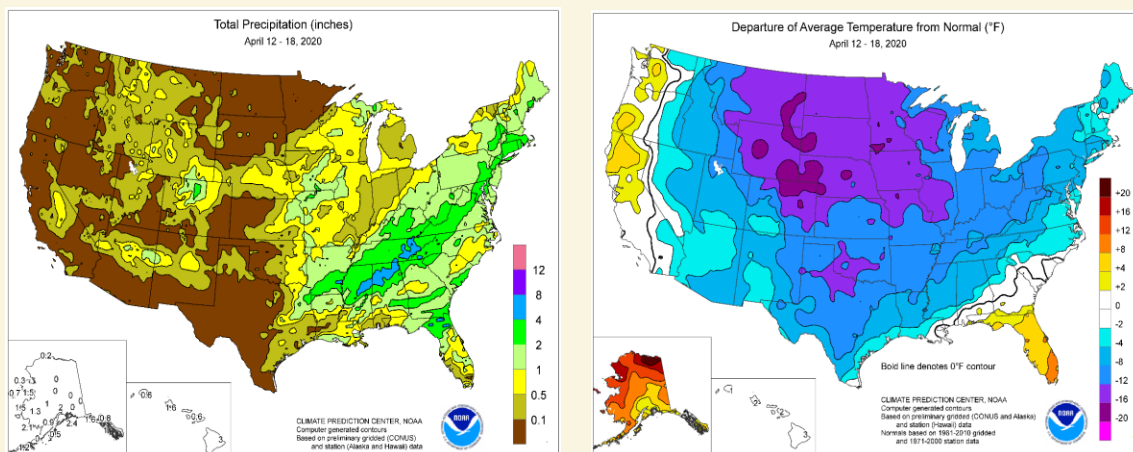
As restrictions begin to lift, consumers will return to restaurants that they believe will provide them with best value and experience. But seemingly minor problems can derail that trust. For example, if the sign outside the building won't stay lit, if a "broken" sign is taped to the door, if floors seem dirty and worn—a guest will notice and downgrade their impression of a restaurant. By focusing on the basics, like clean and well-maintained facilities, quality food, and providing good value to customers, quick-serves can create new opportunities for their businesses.

That's why it's critical that operators double down to ensure that everything that affects the facility—from cleanliness to properly functioning equipment and lighting—contributes to better dining experience. These factors, combined with a restaurant's response to the pandemic and the trust it builds with employees and customers, will play an important role in its future success.

Matt Brown is Chief Revenue Officer at Vixxo, a leading facilities management partner for many Fortune 500 clients in restaurant, retail, convenience, and supermarket industries.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

New Study Reveals Covid-19 Impact on Americans' Food Habits

www.theshelbyreport.com, April 17, 2020

Americans ordered to stay at home during the Covid-19 pandemic are being forced to find new ways to fulfill their daily responsibilities and occupy their free time. A new study released April 15—"America Gets Cooking: Food Trends During Covid-19"—offers a glimpse at how the coronavirus crisis is impacting adult American consumers' food preferences and behaviors, as well as the potential for these new habits to result in lasting change. For this Hunter Food Study Special Report: America Gets Cooking, 1,005 American adults were surveyed online and asked to compare their cooking and eating habits now vs. prior to Covid-19, and share resulting changes in their cooking confidence and enjoyment, ingredients, recipe usage, food waste and more.

Top findings include:

*With home cooking and baking on the rise, confidence in the kitchen and the joy in cooking soar: The Hunter Food Study Special Report: America Gets Cooking confirms statistically that Americans are cooking and baking more now, with over half of consumers reporting they are cooking more (54 percent), and almost as many baking more (46 percent). While use of mail-ordered prepared meals and meal kits (22 percent) and ordering takeout and delivery (30 percent) are also increasing among some consumers, this is being offset by decreases in these behaviors by others (38 percent and 28 percent, respectively). A total of three-quarters (75 percent) of all American adults who are cooking more report that they are more confident in the kitchen (50 percent) or learning more about cooking and starting to build more confidence (26 percent). Not merely a chore, a total of 73 percent are enjoying it more (35 percent) or as much as they did before (38 percent).

*Americans become more adventurous and creative in the kitchen: Many of those surveyed have discovered new ingredients (38 percent) and new brands (45 percent) and are rediscovering ingredients they have not used in a long time (24 percent). Meanwhile, the consumers who claimed to be cooking more often are embracing these new habits even more enthusiastically (44 percent, 50 percent and 28 percent, respectively). Creativity abounds, with roughly one-third (34 percent) of all adults searching for more recipes and meal prepping (31 percent). Top recipes consumers are searching for are simple, practical meal solutions (61 percent) and ways to use up current ingredients (60 percent), although almost half of consumers are also looking for ways to cook healthier (47 percent) and inspiration to try new foods (45 percent). More than one-third (35 percent) of recipe users are searching for a cooking project and inspiration to learn new techniques.

*Households are wasting less food with help from recipes designed to use ingredients on hand: The Hunter Food Study Special Report: America Gets Cooking found that 57 percent of Americans are wasting less food than before the coronavirus crisis, with 60 percent of all adults polled reporting that they are looking for recipes to use the ingredients they have on hand in their pantry or refrigerator. And where are they finding these recipes? Top sources include websites (66 percent), social media (58 percent) and family and friends (52 percent), with Facebook leading the pack as the preferred social platform for recipes, for all but Gen Z.

*Americans split on eating healthier and eating more indulgent and comfort foods: Almost identical numbers of Americans are reporting that they are eating healthier foods (39 percent) as those turning more to indulgent and comfort foods (40 percent). Alcohol beverage consumption remains relatively the same, with equal portions of consumers drinking more wine/beer/spirits (29 percent) as drinking less (25 percent), and the majority holding steady (46 percent) drinking the same amount as they were before the coronavirus crisis. Those drinking more profile to 25-34 (33 percent) and in higher-income households (38 percent in HH with an income of \$100K). Meanwhile snacking throughout the day is at an all-time high, especially in households with children, with half (50 percent) reporting they are snacking more than before.

The new normal: cooking practices impacted long term: Importantly, among the Americans who are cooking more, more than half (51 percent) reported that they will continue to do so when the coronavirus crisis comes to an end. Top motivators include: cooking at home more often saves money (58 percent), cooking helps them to eat healthier (52 percent), trying new recipes (50 percent) and they find cooking relaxing (50 percent). "The study results confirm many of our suspicions and certainly corroborate many of the sales trends we are seeing in the marketplace," stated Heddy DeMaria, chief insights officer at Hunter. "We have long regarded Americans as consummate optimists. When the going gets tough, they find a way to prevail and, in this case, they are choosing to redirect their energy and creativity to the kitchen, not only finding joy in the process of cooking but also in the benefits that come from it."

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| <div>  FRESH TOMATOES  <i>the best of nature™</i> </div> | <div> <h3>MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS?</h3> <p>May 16-19, 2020 National Restaurant Association Show- Chicago Cancelled www.nationalrestaurantshow.com</p> <p>July 24-25, 2020 PMA Foodservice Conference & Expo Monterey Conference Center/Portola Hotel & Spa Monterey, CA www.pma.com/events/foodservice Look for #TeamLipman at booth 238!</p> </div> <div> <p>CREATED BY LIPMAN FOR OUR VALUED CUSTOMERS</p> <p>Learn more about us @ www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com www.suntasticfresh.com</p> <p>Follow us on social media</p> <div>     </div> <p>Questions or comments about the newsletter? Contact: joanna.hazel@lipmanfamilyfarms.com</p> </div> |
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