



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Thanks to ideal growing weather and excellent yields, there is more than ample supply of round and grape tomatoes in Florida. Sizing is well-distributed, despite limited numbers of 2nd and 3rd picks. Roma volumes are also good now, but are expected to decrease as we head into January. Quality is very nice on rounds and grapes but there are some puffiness reports in roma lots.

The Western tomato story is very similar to last week- light volumes on rounds and romas as we work through the transition between Baja and Eastern Mexico to Western Mainland Mexico. Culiacan and Sinaloa's growers are coming online slowly and gradually, with full volume expected by the second week of January. Grape tomatoes are available in steady volumes through Texas with Western Mainland Mexico on tap to see increases in production over the next few weeks. Quality has been mostly good on all varieties from all areas.

Bell Peppers: Bell peppers are also status quo- plenty of good-quality product available in both Eastern and Western markets. In Florida, retail-friendly XL is the short size as some growers are only picking across crown sets. Mexico has multiple areas harvesting, with Culiacan and Escuinapa just now adding to the mix. Supply should be steady for the foreseeable future.

Cucumbers: With product coming from both Baja and the Mainland, Mexico has a plethora of cucumbers available for the West. Eastern markets also have strong supply as both Florida and Honduran crops

are coming to market. Honduras has slowed its imports, as they had previously brought in more than the market could bear, with product backing up. Look for Florida to Decrease acreage and Honduras to pick up the pace in January.

Summer Squash: Several areas in Florida are harvesting Summer squash, providing plenty to meet market demands. Quality is just okay, as there are reports of scarring on both colors. Mexico also has multiple areas in production with new areas adding to the mix.

Green Beans: Green beans continue to be available in promotable volumes in both Florida and Mexico.

Eggplant: Eggplant remains a very promotable item throughout the country, as both Eastern and Western sources have good supply and quality available.

Chili Peppers: Chili pepper supply is bountiful out of Mexico, with plenty of product to cover both Mexican and US demand. Sonora and Sinaloa are the major growing areas at this time and they've got good supply of all varieties except habanero and red fresno. Quality has been very good, although sizing has been small on Anaheim and poblanos. Florida growers are also seeing good volumes and quality, particularly on jalapenos.

Hard Squash: Northern Mainland Mexico continues to have plentiful supplies of hard squash with all types and sizes available daily. With light demand, product has backed up in Nogales, creating some stem decay and pin mold on older lots. In the East, Florida's Fall crops are winding down and storage fruit from other areas is showing its age.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

* The National Diesel Average is up \$.04 this week (from \$ 2.49 to \$2.53 per gallon), reflecting the normal holiday price spike.

* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.24 higher than the same time last year.

* All areas reported price increases this week, with the most significant hike coming from the Rocky Mountain region (up \$.05 per gallon).

* California remains the high-price leader for diesel fuel at \$2.85 while the Gulf Coast region still offers the best bargain at \$2.41 per gallon.

* The WTI Crude Oil price dropped 1.5% this week, moving from \$52.98 to \$52.23 per barrel.

* As we roll toward the holiday weekend, transportation has tightened up with shortages reported in most active shipping areas.



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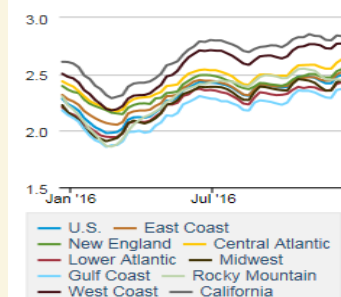
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On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices

(dollars per gallon)



cia Source: Energy Information Administration

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Chefs Predict “What’s Hot” for Menu Trends in 2017

www.restaurant.org, December 8, 2016

Each year, the National Restaurant Association surveys nearly 1,300 professional chefs – members of the American Culinary Federation (ACF) – to explore food and beverage trends at restaurants in the coming year. The annual “What’s Hot” list gives a peak into which food, beverages and culinary themes will be the new items on restaurant menus that everyone is talking about in 2017.

According to the survey, menu trends that will be heating up in 2017 include poke, house-made charcuterie, street food, food halls and ramen. Trends that are cooling down include quinoa, black rice, and vegetarian and vegan cuisines.

TOP 20 FOOD TRENDS

1. New cuts of meat (e.g. shoulder tender, oyster steak, Vegas Strip Steak, Merlot cut)
2. Street food-inspired dishes (e.g. tempura, kabobs, dumplings, pupusas)
3. Healthful kids' meals
4. House-made charcuterie
5. Sustainable seafood
6. Ethnic-inspired breakfast items (e.g., chorizo scrambled eggs, coconut milk pancakes)
7. House-made condiments
8. Authentic ethnic cuisine
9. Heirloom fruit and vegetables
10. African flavors
11. Ethnic spices (e.g. harissa, curry, peri peri, ras el hanout, shichimi)

12. House-made sausage
13. House-made pickles
14. Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth, lupin)
15. House-made/artisan ice cream
16. Whole grain items in kids' meals
17. Protein-rich grains/seeds (e.g., hemp, chia, quinoa, flax)
18. Artisan cheeses
19. Savory desserts
20. Gourmet items in kids' meals

TOP 10 CONCEPT TRENDS

1. Hyper-local sourcing (e.g. restaurant gardens, onsite beer brewing, house-made items)
2. Chef-driven fast-casual concepts
3. Natural ingredients/clean menus
4. Environmental sustainability
5. Locally sourced produce
6. Locally sourced meat and seafood
7. Food waste reduction
8. Meal kits (e.g. pre-measured/prepped raw ingredients for home preparation)
9. Simplicity/back to basics
10. Nutrition

“Menu trends today are beginning to shift from ingredient-based items to concept-based ideas, mirroring how consumers tend to adapt their activities to their overall lifestyle philosophies, such as environmental sustainability and nutrition,” said Hudson Riehle, Senior Vice President of Research for

the National Restaurant Association. “Also among the top trends for 2017, we’re seeing several examples of house-made food items and various global flavors, indicating that chefs and restaurateurs are further experimenting with from-scratch preparation and a broad base of flavors.”

“Chefs are on an endless quest to redefine how consumers eat,” commented ACF National President Thomas Macrina, CEC, CCA, AAC. “By masterfully transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, culinary professionals are at the forefront of changing the culinary landscape.”

The National Restaurant Association surveyed 1,298 American Culinary Federation members in October 2016, asking them to rate 169 items as a “hot trend,” “yesterday’s news,” or “perennial favorite” on menus in 2017.

For complete survey results, additional trends to watch, video and downloadable graphics, visit www.restaurant.org/foodtrends





LIPMAN IN PICTURES

Here are more great entries from recent Lipman Photo Contests!



Bob Poklemba Teaching School Kids about Seed Production
Submitted By: Scott Rush



Omar, Blanca & Carmen Trimming the Tree in Dallas
Submitted By: Kimberly Banks



Beautiful Day to Work at the Farm in Duette, FL
Submitted By: Tina Laird



Dishing up Lipman NC's Thanksgiving Luncheon
Submitted By: Carmen Vera

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	Varied	Steady
Tomatoes	Good	Steady



DECEMBER CALENDAR

All Month

Write a Business Plan Month

December 26th

National Thank You Note Day

December 30th

No Interruptions Day

December 31st

New Year's Eve

National Champagne Day

Estero, FL Weather

Fri Dec 23	Sat Dec 24	Sun Dec 25	Mon Dec 26	Tue Dec 27	Wed Dec 28
81°F	82°F	82°F	82°F	82°F	81°F
64°F	64°F	66°F	64°F	68°F	68°F
NNE 14 MPH	NE 7 MPH	ENE 11 MPH	ENE 11 MPH	ENE 8 MPH	NE 14 MPH

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

How is Color Coloring Customer Perceptions?

www.pizzamarketplace.com, December 20, 2016

Restaurant tableware provider, Tork, and its parent company, SCA, wanted scientifically proven answers on how restaurants' colors affect customers' perception of their restaurant experiences. That's why the companies recently conducted an experiment on the subject, using brainwave technology to measure guests' reactions to various hues. The bottom line of the study? Color is critical to customer experience since it has a notable and predictable impact on their moods and emotions, according to a news release about the experiment.

The color lab

The experiment tracked 16 people wearing brainwave headsets while they sat in eight separate color-saturated restaurant environments. During each episode, they taste-tested drinks and cookies that matched the color of the room in which they sat. Experimenters recorded their brainwave and heart rate information, while participants completed a questionnaire about their reactions to their environments. It is, according to SCA Tork Senior Product Manager for Table Top Julia Wood, an old idea with a new business-focused interpretation.

"Goethe created the first color theory in 1810," Wood said, in a news release about the study. "This isn't an ambition to challenge existing theory but rather contribute with additional color insights, specifically related to a restaurant environment." Specifically, the company learned the following:

Green: The pick-me-upper In green-saturated restaurant environments, people feel revitalized, freshened and renewed, so it may not only be a great midday (aka lunch) environment hue, but also a refreshing consideration for coffee houses and healthy-based restaurants.

Orange: Happy meals For brands with a happiness mission, orange is a sure bet, promising fun and good vibes, but little in the way of luxury or romance. Brainwave and heart rate results put orange solidly in the neutral zone when it came to overall strength of emotional impact. Since orange also elicited mid-range indications of gamma waves it's a good choice for restaurants that see a lot of business gatherings.

Red: That's 'hot' Red evoked little in the way of halfway emotional responses, since it tends to elicit high heart rates and indications of delta and theta brain waves that typically accompany strong emotional connections and even feelings of romance, as well as creativity. It is then, perfect for bars, romantic meet-up environments or even concepts that push creative fun, like restaurants that have art nights or family lunch spots that feature kids games and movies.

Blue: The soother Deep delta waves elicited in blue environments suggested the hue is great for quiet dinner or lunch meeting spots, while high theta waves evoked by blue are also conducive to concepts that seek to welcome, calm or even relax diners, including family lunch and dinner spots or coffee or tea houses, but not necessarily those associated with luxury or business.

Yellow: Excitement in the air Yellow is the color for places that promote energy and conviviality with little interest in promoting a luxurious restaurant experience or business meeting venue. The color would be a good breakfast spot hue, thanks to its mood and energy-lifting qualities, as well as serving nicely for more relaxed kids venues.

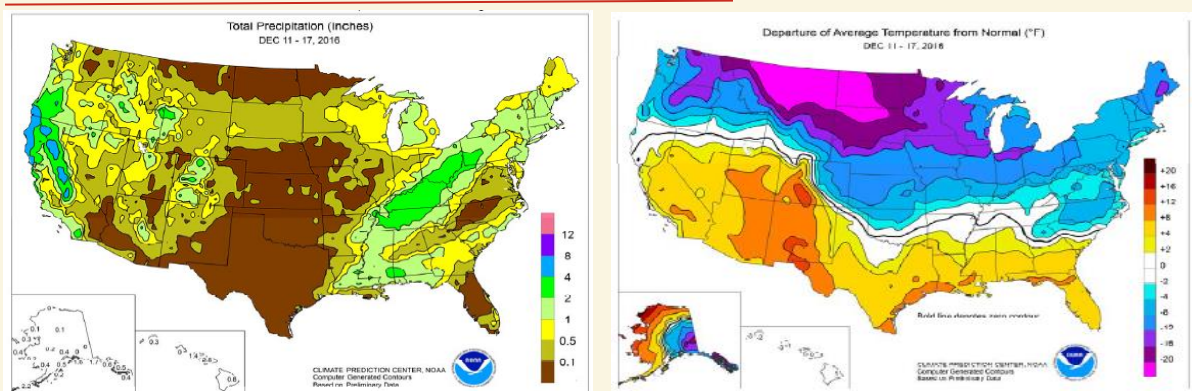
Brown: Relaxing, but maybe too much Brown did little for brainwaves, which study sponsors say indicates it's a neutral zone color that might relax, but doesn't pack a punch with diners. Restaurants seeking to promote tradition, however, might find the color useful, particularly when mixed with other more evocative tints.

Black: Dark in a classy way The experiment dubbed black "a color of complexity" that equates to feelings of luxury and sophistication, according to study sponsors, but possibly also makes this hue a little distancing for diners. Black does evoke brainwaves that indicate high levels of creativity and arousal in participants, although little in the way of overall focus, making it a no-go for most business settings.

White: What you want it to be You could say that white is the golden retriever of the color wheel: It will be essentially whatever you want it to be because researchers said it registered low for all brain waves. It doesn't arouse much, but it doesn't stress much either, making it unobtrusive for focused business settings. It offers little help in environments where any emotional connection is desired, other than an association with modernity, however.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

10-Minute Merchandiser: Handling the Extras

By: Armand Lobato, www.produceretailer.com, December 9, 2016

The produce department is in a constant state of motion. After all, the very design dictates that it doesn't have the inventory holding power of say, the canned goods aisle. Cans and boxes, easily endure an entire day of shopping traffic without "wilting." Nobody, except maybe the person assigning labor hours, wants a "set it and forget it" produce department.

It's important to remember produce personnel are more than just apple stackers. Unlike the out-of-sight night grocery stocker, the produce clerk is often the store's customer ambassador. That apron is like a beacon for consumers needing assistance. Produce clerks are the highly-visible employees and are in best position to interact.

While some imprudent produce managers may feel providing extra services (besides stocking) may slow productivity, friendly and knowledgeable produce clerks can indeed make a difference where customers choose to shop. Providing these "extra" services is equally as important as a clean department and providing high-quality produce. So what should a produce professional be prepared to do?

Sales Floor Assistance Most of the time customers look to produce clerks on the sales floor for basic direction, and this can come in a myriad of forms: Where can I find the limes? When are pomegranates in season? The pineapple is kind of green, are they ripe? I'm supposed to make pico de gallo for a get-together, what items will I need? Yellow watermelon – what does that taste like? The questions never end. Be prepared with answers.

Customer-facing personnel, especially need to be friendly, upbeat and helpful. Responding to customers' questions, it should be taught, is not an interruption of daily tasks, but an integral part of a store's success. Produce clerks should be trained to give a customer their full attention. Then, the clerks should take as much time as necessary to help the customer, to explain how to select an item or to offer a sample. If the clerk doesn't know an answer to a customer's question, she or he should explain that as well, and promptly ask another clerk or the produce manager to address the issue.

As clerks or produces manager progress in their skills, they should always be on the lookout for the customer who obviously hesitates in front of a display. This is a sure sign that they have a question in mind, but, like most customers, are afraid to say something. Intervene and say something like, "Hi, you look like you have a question ...". A manager should always teach their employees to be sincere and genuine in their demeanor and say things like, "Of course I'll help ... You're not bothering me! That's what I'm here for!" Of course clerks need to be aware of their stocking duties, their time and priorities and keep conversations to a reasonable length of time, but they should always be on the lookout to assist customers in need.

Front End Assistance The front-end assistance call takes clerks out of their element. Customers backed up in line may be in for a longer wait when a cashier has to wait for a produce clerk. Oftentimes the call turns out to be a request for a replacement produce item. "This cantaloupe fell and cracked open, can you bring up another one?" The better way — and one to mentor with your front-end supervisors — is to call with specifics, so the clerk takes a replacement melon instead of making two trips. Keep a small notepad in your pocket to write down details in case you need to forward notes to the produce manager or keep for reference. When a customer sees that it's important enough for you to write down, they are more likely trust that you will follow through with their request.

Phone Assistance/Etiquette Inbound produce phone calls aren't as frequent as what the pharmacy or the floral department receives. However, you should train your clerks to be as courteous and helpful on the phone as they would be in person. When a call for produce assistance is paged, answer it promptly. Keep a notepad handy and, if need be, take down pertinent information and ask for a name and return phone number. Most phone calls are for general topics such as if you have something in stock, the price of an item, or an order for something special, like a fruit basket.

General Store Assistance Customers don't necessarily see produce clerks on the sales floor, only store employees. Clerks should always be willing to help a customer no matter what the request, and never say, "I'm sorry, that's not my department." One tip to keep produce clerks from wandering too far away is to have them carry a printed store directory in their pocket to steer customers in the right direction.

Combining great quality produce with superb customer service is key to repeat business, maximizing sales and generating gross profit. In the customer's eyes, the produce clerks are on stage.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS!

March 12-16, 2017

PMA's Emerging Leaders Program
Eller College of Management/ University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ
www.pma.com/events/emerging-leaders-program

May 19--21, 2017

West Coast Produce Expo
JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa
Palm Desert, CA
www.westcoastproduceexpo.com

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