



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Although growers expect lighter production numbers over the next few weeks, Florida's round tomato volumes are meeting market demands, particularly on bigger fruit. The size profile has definitely picked up with harvests heavier to 5x6 and bigger tomatoes. Quality is excellent from Naples/ Immokalee farms but there are still some challenges on product coming from the Homestead area. Roma production has increased a bit this week but is still considered light. Quality and sizing vary by grower, in part, based on the variety they have chosen to grow. Warmer weather has boosted grape tomato numbers, providing plenty of good-quality fruit to the East.

Mainland Mexico continues to have strong volumes of both mature green and vine-ripe rounds. Like Florida's crops, sizing is on the larger side so small fruit is short this week. Look for the sizing profile to come down later in the month as growers come back through crops for later picks. Roma numbers remain strong in West Mexico, although the sizing has shifted to more large from what had primarily been jumbo and XL. Grape tomatoes are still in full swing with plentiful crossings daily.

Bell Peppers: With a few new fields and warmer weather in play, Florida's pepper supply and quality are good this week. More Mexico growers are coming online in different regions and weather has improved, so we are also seeing stronger volumes in the West. Quality has been excellent with strong walls, healthy stems and nice seed cavities.

Cucumbers: Honduran imports continue to provide the East with a steady flow of cucumbers. Quality is good, especially on fresh product. Mexico's volume is expected to pick up over the weekend due to warmer weather, but may slow into next week as cooler weather is forecasted. Quality and condition have been strong with no issues reported.

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Summer Squash: Mexico's squash supply is on the increase as new blocks begin and nicer weather brings better volumes and quality. Florida farms flushed over the past week, providing a reasonably steady supply of both yellow and zucchini. Quality has been nice on zucchini but is still hit and miss on yellow.

Green Beans: Mainland Mexico's bean numbers are expected to remain steady for the next few weeks barring any weather issues. Florida's yields are down due to past weather, but there's an adequate amount of product available to meet the market's light demand. Quality is good from both areas.

Eggplant: Florida's eggplant supply remains on the light side, but Mexico farms are picking up the pace. Overall quality is good.

Chili Peppers: Mexico's chili pepper supply is working its way back to normal levels for this time of year. Jalapenos and serranos are getting there, but slowly. With better volume expected this week and next, availability should get closer to but not quite reach normal levels. Quality has been all over the place with some misshape, varied sizing, scarring and overall weaker pepper crossing. Fortunately, the next wave of supply is looking better.

Colored Bells: After a strong flush in Mexico, volume has lightened up this week, particularly on orange and yellow pepper. Look for better production in the next few weeks as growers who picked green pepper to capitalize on the high markets of a few weeks ago get caught up and good weather conditions provide a boost to maturity.

Organic Veg: Volumes in Mexico have picked up on organic squash, cucumbers and peppers, providing solid availability at Nogales.

Organic Grape Tomatoes: With some ranches flushing and plenty of good weather, organic grapes are available in strong numbers this week.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*For the fourth week in a row, the national diesel average is \$2.97 per gallon.

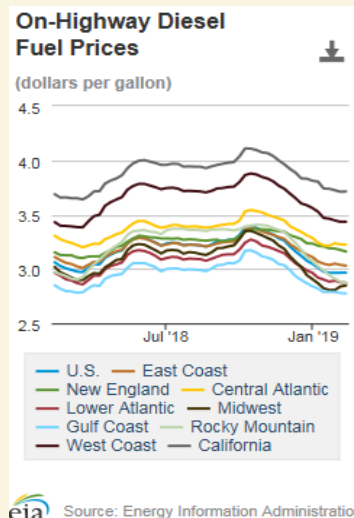
* The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.10 lower than the same time last year.

* The Midwest and California both reported slight price increases this week. All other areas reported price declines or held steady with last week's price.

*California continues to have the highest diesel prices in the country at \$3.71 per gallon while the Gulf Coast is the low-price leader at \$2.78 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price rose 1% this week, moving from \$53.66 to \$54.41 per barrel.

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





SUNTASTIC SPOTLIGHT

Greenhouse Again as Smooth as a Blanket

By: Arlette Sijmonsma, www.hortidaily.com, January 30, 2019

Levelling an existing greenhouse is quite a project. At Suntastic, it's an art they've mastered. Over the last couple of years, two of their existing greenhouses have been smartened up this way, and last year it was time for the final phase. This time they decided to put all pipes and gutters on rollers and move them to the side. "Now it's smooth as a blanket", Albert Janssen with Suntastic shows.

Desert greenhouse

It's planting time at Suntastic. In various phases, new tomato and pepper plants are being brought into the greenhouse, and in a few weeks new produce will be harvested. It's hard to recall the situation of only a few weeks ago, when the greenhouse was completely empty and looked a bit like a desert. Back then George de Groot with De Groot Laser Grading & Excavating was flattening the ground in the greenhouse.



Phase 4

Albert Janssen met George in 2012 / 2013, when Suntastic was building phase 4 of their 16 hectare greenhouse enterprise in Exeter, Ontario. De Groot Laser Grading & Excavating was hired to do the leveling work for the expansion. When they saw how precise George worked, Suntastic decided to have him work on all of their greenhouses. "It's top-notch", Albert says. "Within the difference of an inch, the entire project is levelled. Whereas many others might choose to work with a bulldozer, George only works with his own machines. He only needs

someone with a rake to help out every now and then."

Since 2012 / 2013, George became a regular visitor of the Suntastic project – leveling the existing greenhouses built in 1996 and in 1997. "Thanks to the laser treatment, measuring the level of the ground of the complete greenhouse, he eventually knew the greenhouse better than we did ourselves", Albert laughs. "He asked about a 15 centimeter height difference in one of the existing greenhouses. Then I remembered we had to cope with a leaking pipe some years ago and that water evaporated onto the ground. We'd always known there was some issues in that corner, but never really connected the dots."

Rolling

Last year the final project was completed: the leveling of phase 3, built in 2003. Unlike the previous projects, the pipes weren't raised this time. "Phase 3 is higher than the older projects, so it was too difficult to raise the pipes and even if we would have raised them, it wouldn't be possible to work with some of George's equipment."



Rolling aside

Another solution was thought of and eventually in half of the greenhouse, being 2 hectares, greenhouse equipment was put on rollers and rolled over to one side of the greenhouse. "George did his job and we rolled everything over to the other side." Quite a job, right? "Rolling the installation aside isn't more

trouble than lifting it up", Albert laughs. "It's a matter of planning and putting the right people in the right position. It all turned out fine: the pipes are back in place now. And during the project, we added extra pipe support, following new safety rules. Instead of a distance of 2 meters, we now work with a 1.5 meter distance between them."

In a normal levelling process, the soil's surface is loosened and crushed in again. "Because we recirculate all the water nowadays and no more water is lost in the ground, the soil was so hard and dehydrated that we had to introduce new material. To get it all smooth again, 4,000 tons of fine gravel was driven in to the greenhouse. If you wouldn't know, you wouldn't tell – but it's smooth as a whistle."



New plants

With the refurbishment of the final phase completed, the plants are brought in this week. There's a small shift in the company's portfolio. Last year, Huron Produce/Suntastic was acquired by open field production company Lipman Family Farms. Being part of a group like this influences the portfolio, Albert says. "Gradually we are moving more and more toward specialties: we produce a smaller pointed pepper on a larger scale and also increase the volume of the snack tomatoes. We're following the demand from the market and develop certain products."



AN APPLE A DAY

Could Smelling Fatty Food Lead to a Healthier Diet?

By: Phil Lempert, www.winsightgrocerybusiness.com, February 7, 2019

Scientists at the University of South Florida have published a new study in the Journal of Marketing Research that reports that breathing in fatty-food smells for more than two minutes actually works as a deterrent to overeating—and it could offer a new method of keeping you or your kids on a healthier diet.

The team behind the study suggests exposure to these initially appealing aromas is enough to trigger a reward in the brain that then leaves us satisfied.

"Ambient scent can be a powerful tool to resist cravings for indulgent foods," said one of the researchers, Dipayan Biswas.

"In fact, subtle sensory stimuli like scents can be more effective in influencing children's and adults' food choices than restrictive policies," he said.

Using a scent nebulizer at a school canteen and a supermarket—discreetly disseminating smells such as apples, strawberries, pizzas and cookies—researchers found smells of the more unhealthy foods (pizzas and cookies) made it more likely participants would pick a healthy food.

At a school canteen in the U.S., where about 900 kids arrived for lunch, the number of unhealthy items picked fell to 21.43% with a pizza smell. When they smelled a healthy food—an apple—36.96% picked unhealthy foods compared to 36.54% for no smell at all.

PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February All Month

Time Management Month

February 17th-24th

National FFA (Future Farmers of America) Week

February 17th

Random Acts of Kindness Day

February 18th

President's Day

February 19th

Best Friends Day

Immokalee, FL Weather

Fri Feb 15	Sat Feb 16	Sun Feb 17	Mon Feb 18	Tue Feb 19
80° F	81° F	85° F	87° F	86° F
58° F	62° F	77° F	67° F	67° F
NE 6 MPH	SW 11 MPH	SE 11 MPH	S 10 MPH	SE 9 MPH
			Precip 20%	

NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

Study: Convenience Not a Given in Online Grocery

By: Russell Redman, www.supermarketnews.com, February 11, 2019

Though billed as a key benefit of online grocery shopping, convenience remains a gap to be bridged for many consumers, new research from Bain & Co. and Google finds. Of consumers who have shopped online for groceries once in the past 12 months, just 42% said the online experience saves them time, according to Bain and Google's "Omnichannel Grocery Is Open For Business" report. The survey polled more than 8,000 grocery shoppers nationwide.

The convenience factor contributes to the low penetration rate of online grocery shopping in the United States, which currently hovers at 3%, the study revealed. Just 25% of respondents said they used an online grocery service in the last year, and only 26% of those users — or 6% of all consumers surveyed — reported that they've been placing online orders more than once a month. "Online grocery shopping in the U.S. trails that of other e-commerce categories in large part because our grocery shopping habits are so deeply ingrained, and online grocery retailers haven't yet convinced customers that grocery shopping online can be a better experience," said Stephen Caine, a leader in Bain & Company's retail practice. "Traditional grocers have decades of experience optimizing their physical stores to align with how shoppers think — training them to navigate store shelves to easily find what they are looking for, making it easy for them to make trade-offs between products, and providing inspiration when they want to try something new," he explained. "Online grocery shopping has not yet found a way to digitally replicate these cues simply and intuitively."

When it comes to buying groceries online, the Bain/Google study defined convenience as saving time and an intuitive, seamless shopping experience. But for a lot of customers, especially those new to online grocery shopping, that hasn't been the case. "Consumers report that browsing aisles is one of the most enjoyable elements of in-store shopping. Browsing groceries via a web browser, on the other hand, can be a challenge: irrelevant search results, unhelpful product recommendations and limited filtering options increase the time required to fill a basket. These inconveniences add up and represent a major obstacle for most new adopters," the report said. "E-commerce is expected to make life easier, but the Bain and Google survey found that it takes at least a few attempts with online grocery to begin to perceive a real benefit."

Indeed, Bain and Google found that of respondents who shopped for groceries online three times within the past 12 months, 63% said buying groceries online saved them time versus a trip to the store. The percentage of shoppers agreeing that online grocery is a time-saver rises slightly among those who have done so four or five times in the past year and approaches 70% at six to 10 or more times. "Online grocery does get easier as consumers become more familiar with a given retailer. They build familiarity with the web page and browsing layout, can easily reorder items from past purchases, and begin to benefit from personalized recommendations and other features," Bain and Google observed. "To keep that shopper, retailers need to stimulate repeat trials — investing to acquire the shopper not just once, but three or more times to convince the customer of the benefits of shopping online. Now is the time for retailers to experiment with bounce-back offers to encourage follow-up visits, reminders and multi-trip discounts to help move consumers from trial to new-habit-forming adoption."

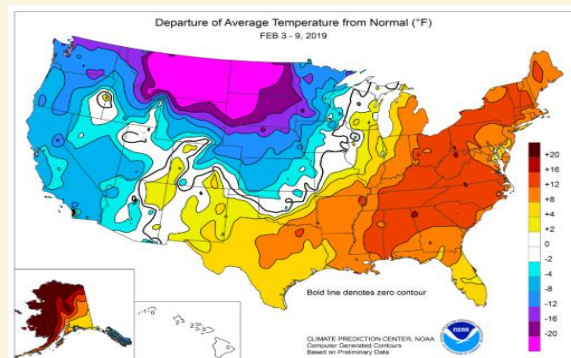
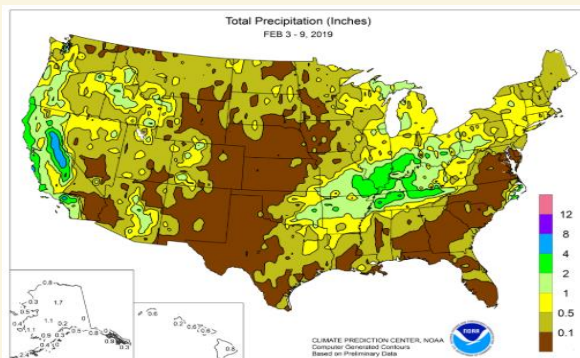
Customers who regularly shop a particular grocery store are highly likely to make purchases with that same retailer online, according to the study. When respondents who hadn't used an online grocery service in the past 12 months were asked which one they'd try first, 96% cited a traditional brick-and-mortar retailer for home delivery. Eighty-five percent said they would select a store they already visit, while 11% said they would use another omnichannel grocer and 4% an online-only retailer.

Seventeen percent of those polled said they've tried a new retailer in their area in the last three months, and 25% indicated that they're likely to try a new retailer for a routine grocery trip. "Winning a first trial is so important because there is a general consumer 'stickiness' when it comes to online grocery. Seventy-five percent of online grocery shoppers say they are still using the first online grocer they tried," noted Michelle Paratore, a member of Bain's retail practice. "Knowing that existing consumers are likely to try their online offering first, omnichannel retailers are well-positioned to keep these shoppers for continued visits and purchases as long as they deliver an experience that is convenient and meets shoppers' needs."

With e-commerce penetration expected to at least triple in the next decade, retailers able to provide a satisfying omnichannel grocery experience "have a rare opportunity to edge out their competition," the Bain/Google report said. "Although the shift online will rapidly accelerate, we anticipate that the majority of grocery spend is still expected to occur in physical stores in 2030," according to Caine. "The winners in this changing grocery landscape will be the retailers that can deliver frictionless omnichannel experiences, investing in digital experiences and tools that save time for consumers shopping online or in the store."

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



RESTAURANT NEWS AND VIEWS

How Restaurants Can Use Push Notifications to Drive Sales

By: Perse Faily, www.modernrestaurantmanagement.com, February 7, 2019

Once you've successfully gotten guests to download your mobile app, a lot of great things can happen for your restaurant. You can gather and use a multitude of data to better serve smarter marketing. You can drive incremental visits, encourage infrequent guests to return more often and get additional dollars out of frequent ones. Restaurant apps are powerful tools and no element within the app promises a more immediate and more direct line of communication than the push notification. With great power, though, comes great responsibility. Here are the best practices on using push notifications to drive sales:

Be Timely, Personal and Interesting

From time-based and location-based notifications to city-specific and even weather-specific promotions, the ability to customize which guests receive what notifications gives your brand the ability to market better, to be topical, and to be personal, usually resulting in better outcomes. With the quality and quantity of data gathered by both the applications and broader multi-channel marketing tools, brands can reach more people, more effectively. We could, for example, be timely by offering free ice cream with purchase to help beat a summer heat wave, or we can be personal and guests to try an item before it is broadly available. Technology gives us the power to customize our messages. We can be topical. Individual. Smart.

Don't Overdo It

More restaurants live on our smartphones than ever before, thanks to the proliferation of restaurant mobile apps. In general, it becomes possible to tell a lot about the customers themselves through the data generated, including how frequently each guest should hear from you. Give a weekly notification to a monthly visitor, a monthly notification to a quarterly visitor. In every case, the best way to drive incremental revenue is to encourage extra visits, without overcommunicating. It's important to not overdo messaging guests, or they will learn to tune it out. Or worse yet, they might turn off messaging permissions entirely.

Remember, There's a Time ...

The best time to reach your potential guests? Right before they make a food decision. It's possible to send users a push notification in the 20-30-minute period just before they usually open their app. For guests coming into the window of time where they determine their lunch spot or their dinner plans, being top of mind, or better yet, top of mind, with a reason to dine, can lead to plenty of incremental dollars and visits.

... And a Place

Thanks to geolocation, we can tie push notifications to our users' locations. It is possible to cross into the realm of being creepy for guests, so be careful how you utilize geolocation. But the fact is, where our guests are physically at can be helpful in determining when to drive push notifications.

Imagine knowing that 20 percent of your visitors went to the gas station before visiting their lunch location and sending every app user at a gas station within three miles a lunch offer. Or imagine asking them to check in upon arrival, so their food is perfectly timed and piping hot when they arrive. Guest location can drive impressive experiential gains that keep them coming back faithfully.

For brands thinking about mobile applications, or for those who've yet to perfect a digital strategy, there are few tools more effective than the push notifications. Apps give you the ability to act on data to ensure that your guests are having the experience they envision. That they are getting offers than inspire action. That you understand them. That you care. When used properly, push notifications can be the biggest change maker in your toolbox.

FRESH
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March 7-9, 2019
Southeast Produce Council's Southern Exposure
Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Resort
Orlando, FL
www.seproducecouncil.com
Come join #TeamLipman at Booth #1125!

May 9-10, 2019
West Coast Produce Expo
JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa
Palm Desert, CA
www.westcoastproduceexpo.com

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