



**MARKET UPDATE**

**Round Tomatoes:** With Mexico struggling to get off the ground for the season and Florida dealing with yield issues, round tomatoes are still very short. Florida's yield concerns go back to weather in November and December which caused a poor fruit set on current harvests. Sizing is also down but a big factor is that growers are picking 2nds, 3rds, 4ths and even 5ths occasionally, to provide supply while the elevated markets warrant. Quality is very good on crown picks, but is definitely lesser on later picks with some scarring and puffiness. Expect a mixture of quality as long as the high markets and extra picks continue. Only a few Mexican growers have gotten started so far and volume remains limited. The fruit is big and color is light, but it has provided a glimmer of hope for supply improving. Growers expect to see a little more fruit next week, but don't expect a major change for another few weeks.

**Roma Tomatoes:** The anticipated roma increases from Mexico have been slowed by weather and are now expected to come along as we move into February. There's a variety of quality and sizing out there so not all fruit will meet customers' specs. With only a few growers in the roma game, Florida continues to have minimal numbers that won't have significant impact on availability or pricing. Quality has been mostly good but sizing is small for the same reason as rounds.

**Grape Tomatoes:** Although Florida's grape tomato numbers were up last week, this week's yields are down in and supply is more limited than last week. Not critically short- just limited. Quality is similar to other varieties... good on early picks (1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) and lesser on later picks. Mexico's producers still have good supply and nice quality as long as the fruit is fresh.

**Bell Peppers:** This week's bell pepper supply is slightly better in FL, but nothing game-changing since acreage is limited and light. Overall quality is pretty good, but we have seen slight to moderate issues with bruising, scarring and occasional decay. After working through crown picks, fruit has sized down with more of the volume coming in as L and below. Mexico is beginning to

see better numbers as Sinaloa comes into new crops. Sonora will ramp up next week as more of the open field growers get going. The shade house growers in northern areas will also pick up in quantity at about the same time. We should see decent numbers on bells within the next week.

**Cucumbers:** Mexico's cucumber volume continues to be light after crop losses from the heavy rains this season. Weather has been clear this week so we should see a light increase in supply going into the weekend. Some growers are replanting a new crop after terminating their first crop early. Quality overall has been strong and we shouldn't see any quality issues but we don't expect to see a spike in supply until early February. This has been a good week in terms of supply for the Honduran cuc deal and more of the same is expected for next week. There are some quality concerns with scarring and sunken areas, but one can pack a box that meets customer specs.

**Green Beans:** Availability has improved in FL as bean yields have increased for south FL farms. Quality is good and there are no issues reported. Most growers in Mexico are seeing lighter bean production this week, but our Victory Garden ranch in Guasave expects good numbers for the next 7-10 days.

**Summer Squash:** Previous rain and cold weather has caused many issues in Mexican squash crops including bloom drop. Production on squash looks to be challenging for the next several weeks with inconsistent and minimal availability. Squash could remain a challenge until new spring plantings get underway which is expected in late February/early March. There's not much help coming from Florida and the quality just isn't there on the fruit that is available. For example, one recent load came in with 70% condition defects. There's at least a little new crop coming in 7-10 days but it won't be significant volume.

**Eggplant:** Florida's eggplant supply is lighter than last year due to an overall reduction in acreage. Quality ranges from fair to good, as much of the fruit has seen rain and inconsistent weather patterns. Fortunately, Mexican farms

have worked past their slow start in Mainland Mexico and should have steady supply to offer for at least the next few weeks.

**HH Cucumbers:** Overall volume has dropped significantly out of Mainland Mexico this past week as some farms are reporting mildew issues and one major grower is past their peak for this season. Look for availability to possibly shorten up until farms move into Spring plantings. Our Florida deal is in good production this week and expects more of the same for next week as long as the weather cooperates.

**Chili Peppers:** Hot peppers out of Sinaloa are back in action and should gain some ground moving into next week. For the past few weeks weather had paused production and produced subpar quality. Sonora, which is not much of a factor this time of year, will limp along until their spring sets begin at the end of February.

**Mini Sweet Peppers:** Mainland Mexico mini sweet growers are reporting that they are in the middle of a bloom drop and cooler weather from 10-14 days ago is keeping the next sets from sizing and coloring up. It could be at least another week and possibly up to 2 weeks before they see better supply. Green and small fruit continues to be a concern as growers struggle to meet obligations

**Organic Cucumbers:** Organic cucumber availability is finally improving slightly as more growers get into new crops. There's a big spread in pricing and quality as growers in different areas experienced varying weather conditions.

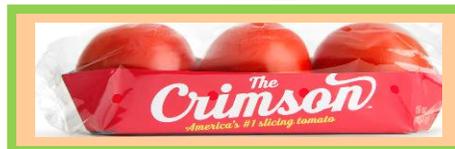
**Organic Bell Peppers:** Farms are still experiencing light production as a result of rain-induced bloom drop which will likely last another few weeks.

**Organic Squash:** Yields are way down as growers have either lost crops or are experiencing a bloom drop. Quality can be challenging on what's available. We do not expect to see improvements for at least two weeks.

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## PRODUCE POLITICS

### Senate Passes USMCA with Overwhelming Support

[www.theproducenews.com](http://www.theproducenews.com), January 16, 2020

Today the Senate passed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement by a bipartisan vote of 89 – 10.

"We've long waited for this day and now USMCA will finally head to the President's desk," said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. "The passage of USMCA is great news for America's farmers and ranchers. With Congressional consideration now complete, our farmers and ranchers are eager to see the President sign this legislation and begin reaping the benefits of this critical agreement.

"USMCA will advance United States agricultural interests in two of the most important markets for American farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses," said Perdue. "This high-standard agreement builds upon our existing markets to expand United States food and agricultural exports and support food processing and rural jobs."

"U.S. apple growers across the nation today are applauding the Senate for getting the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement over the finish line with overwhelming bipartisan support," said Jim Bair, president and CEO of the U.S. Apple Association. "Senate passage of the USMCA is significant for the U.S. Apple Association and its members as Mexico and Canada represent our top two export markets, totaling nearly a half-billion dollars in annual sales.

"Throughout USMCA negotiations during the past year, USApple members have rolled up their sleeves and carried out unprecedented advocacy efforts to help secure ratification of the agreement," said Bair. The USMCA, like its predecessor, the North American Free Trade Agreement, is good for apples. Under NAFTA, apple exports to Mexico quadrupled and those to Canada doubled. Maintaining the apple industry's important trading partnerships with Mexico and Canada under the USMCA has been a top priority for the apple industry. We now look forward to President Trump signing the agreement into law."

"The produce industry is one of the cornerstones of the original NAFTA agreement and its continued success is vital for the economic well-being of all three countries. The USMCA includes important reforms that will ensure that the success of NAFTA will continue well into the 21st century," said Tom Stenzel, president and CEO of United Fresh Produce Association. "The fresh produce industry is eager for the passage and implementation of the USMCA to ensure that the growth of trade over the last quarter century is sustained and that we build upon the investments made by businesses in all three countries. This agreement is most important as we continue to meet the demands from consumers for increased availability of healthy fresh fruits and vegetables. Finally, we believe this new trade agreement will strengthen our partnership between the three countries and provide essential cooperation in the fresh fruit and vegetable industry."

Canada and Mexico are the largest and second-largest export markets for United States food and agricultural products, totaling more than \$39.7 billion food and agricultural exports in 2018. These exports support more than 325,000 American jobs.

All food and agricultural products that have zero tariffs under the North American Free Trade Agreement will remain at zero tariffs. Since the original NAFTA did not eliminate all tariffs on agricultural trade between the United States and Canada, the USMCA will create new market access opportunities for United States exports to Canada of dairy, poultry, and eggs, and in exchange the United States will provide new access to Canada for some dairy, peanut, and a limited amount of sugar and sugar-containing products.

Earlier this year, nearly 1,000 American food and agriculture associations and companies announced their support for USMCA and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture signed a letter to Congressional leadership urging them to ratify USMCA.

In September, all former U.S. Secretaries of Agriculture since President Reagan's Administration announced support for USMCA. In a letter to Congressional leaders, former Secretaries John Block (Reagan), Mike Espy (Clinton), Dan Glickman (Clinton), Ann Veneman (W. Bush), Mike Johanns (W. Bush), Ed Shafer (W. Bush), and Tom Vilsack (Obama) underscored the importance of passing USMCA saying, "We need a strong and reliable trade deal with our top two customers for U.S. agriculture products. USMCA will provide certainty in the North American market for the U.S. farm sector and rural economy. We strongly support ratification of USMCA."



#### TRANSPORTATION FACTS

\*The National Diesel Average declined by \$.015 this week, moving from \$3.08 to \$3.06 per gallon.

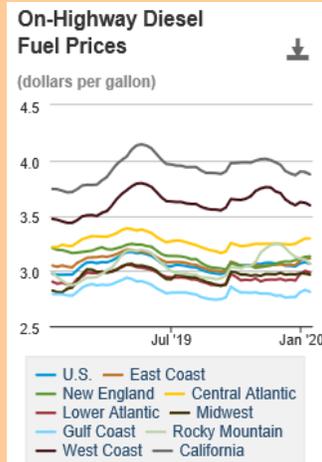
\* The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.09 higher than the same time last year.

\* All but one reporting area saw pricing fall from \$.01-.04 per gallon. New England was the exception and came in with a very minimal increase (less than \$.01).

\*California's fuel price tops the charts at \$3.87 per gallon while the Gulf Coast remains the low-price leader at \$2.81 per gallon.

\*The WTI Crude Oil price fell 2.9% this week, moving from \$59.56 to \$57.81 per barrel.

\*With the holidays in the rear view mirror and harvests on the short side, trucks are readily available to move produce.



Source: Energy Information Administration



**FRESH CUT FOCUS**

**Super Bowl Concepts**

Contributed By: Johnathan Maldonado, Manager of Innovation/Product Development- Lipman Dallas, TX

This month's Fresh Cut Focus will feature snack and appetizer ideas that are perfect for your Super Bowl parties or other gatherings! Lipman's fresh cut product line provides you with the best of nature, cut fresh and packed for convenience year round. Our product-specific processing and patented packaging drives optimal shelf life – meaning you'll receive only the best product, every time. And this produce not only tastes good... it helps customers save valuable time in the kitchen, and the convenient packaging also reduces the risk of foodborne illness, by decreasing the opportunity for cross-contamination.

For more information, please reach out to your usual Lipman contact or one of our fresh cut specialists: Johnathan Maldonado at 214.907.0695, Chris Daulerio- East at 215.870.8956 or Brian Arbini- West at 209.402.5184.



Blackened shrimp and guacamole grilled zucchini bites with cilantro

*A New "Superfood" is in Town*

Make way for zucchini - this nutrient-rich squash is full of antioxidants and water content, making it a filling vegetable that can aid digestion, blood sugar levels, and more! It is also very versatile in cooking and can be used as a healthier alternative for many different game day recipes and snacks.

**LIPMAN INGREDIENTS:**

- Coin-cut zucchini squash

**KIT VERSATILITY:**

- Foodservice items
- National accounts
- Salad bars
- Behind the glass deli
- Kits sold for repack at store level





Salt and vinegar zucchini chips



Cheesy zucchini nachos with cheddar cheese and BBQ chicken

**PRODUCE BAROMETER**

ITEM	QUALITY	PRICING
Bell Pepper	Mostly Good	Steady
Cucumber	Mostly Good	Elevated
Eggplant	Varied	Steady
Green Beans	Good	Steady
Jalapenos	Varied	Steady
Onions	Good	Higher
Squash	Poor	Higher
Tomatoes	Fair to Good	Elevated



**JANUARY CALENDAR**

- All Month
- National Sunday Supper Month
- January 19<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>**
- National Fresh-Squeezed Juice Week
- January 20<sup>th</sup>**
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 22<sup>nd</sup>**
- National Southern Food Day
- January 24<sup>th</sup>**
- National Compliment Day

**Naples, FL Weather**

Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
Jan 18	Jan 19	Jan 20	Jan 21	Jan 22
79° F	80° F	74° F	65° F	67° F
64° F	64° F	51° F	45° F	60° F
E 17 MPH	SE 5 MPH	N 12 MPH	N 17 MPH	N 14 MPH
	Precip 10%	Precip 30%		

## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

### 2020 What's Hot Culinary Forecast Now Available

[www.fb101.com](http://www.fb101.com), January 2020

Comfort food and innovation are pairing up on this year's list of what's hot in trends and creations coming to diners from restaurant kitchens. The annual What's Hot Culinary Forecast, released today by the National Restaurant Association, offers a detailed look at the topics, trends, and products—from the ordinary to the surprising—rated sizzling hot by chefs working in kitchens across the country.

Diners will see many more alternatives in restaurants this year, as owners and operators adopt eco-friendly packaging, plant-based proteins, revamped classic cocktails, specialty burger blends (mushroom-beef burgers, etc.), and unique beef and pork cuts, which all made the list of top 10 trends.

“These trends reflect Americans’ desires to combine the tried and true with the new and different,” said Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of research for the Association. “This mix of comfort and edginess is a microcosm of the world we live in. Consumers want something different, but want to keep what satisfies them at the same time, and more than 1 million restaurants around the country are ready to meet those wants and needs.”

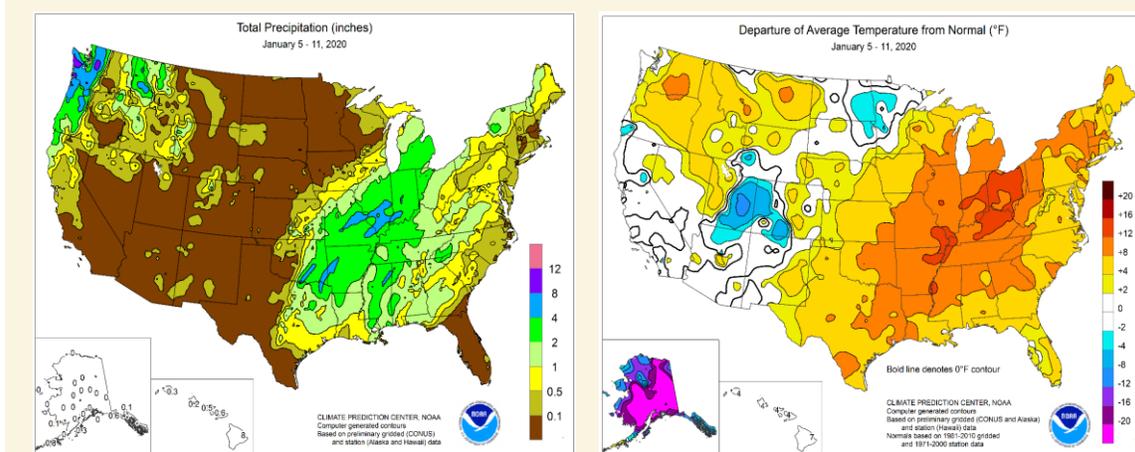
For the first time, the What's Hot Report also looked at off-premises trends as restaurants and third party delivery services respond to the rising consumer preference for delivery. Eco-friendly packaging was the overwhelming leader in the category, reflecting the increased importance restaurant operators are putting on sustainability practices.

Healthy is also hot this year. According to the survey, healthy bowls will sizzle on more menus, and healthy kid's meals continue to be top-of-mind for parents and chefs alike. And, while CBD-infused foods led the 2019 survey, they slipped out of the top ten this year. CBD snacks and sweets appeared in the dessert category and CBD-infused foods and beverages are in the top 5 culinary innovations.

The What's Hot survey was conducted in November-December 2019. More than 600 American Culinary Federation chefs rated 133 individual trends in 12 categories, identified in partnership with Technomic, Inc.

## NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



## NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

### A \$1.4T Opportunity for Food Retailers

By: Gina Acosta, [www.progressivegrocer.com](http://www.progressivegrocer.com), January 16, 2020

Grocers not already adding restaurants and other experiential features to their physical stores may be missing out on a big revenue opportunity. According to new research from 5W Public Relations, dining out and experiences rank at the top of the list of categories that consumers, especially younger consumers such as Millennials, are most likely to splurge on. The agency's 2020 Consumer Culture Report shows that dining out and travel/experiences ranked first and second respectively across all generations as the most splurge-worthy categories, beating out fashion, beauty, electronics, and health among others.

Overall the consumer categories ranked in the following order:

Dining Out 43%  
 Travel/Experiences 41%  
 Snacks 39%  
 Electronics 35%  
 Health & Wellness 33%  
 Personal Care 30%  
 Shoes/Accessories 30%  
 Beauty 29%  
 Home Goods/Furniture 29%  
 Clothing/Fashion 27%

"Our data shows that the trend of buying experiences over possessions is not only on the rise, but that people are willing to spend the highest amount of money on these categories," said 5W CEO and Founder Ronn Torossian. "There is a huge opportunity for growth and expansion in the travel, entertainment, hospitality and restaurant industries this year. Furthermore, all consumer brands need to realize that their customers value experiences first, and tailor their messaging to capture this want."

Specifically, Millennials are projected to spend \$1.4 trillion in 2020. Their No. 1 "splurge" is dining out, according to the report. In addition, at least 68% of them prefer finding new products in-store to finding them online, and 83% of Millennials say it's important for the companies they buy from to align with their beliefs and values.

The report detailed some key takeaways for retailers:

Tell stories (visual or otherwise) about the experiential value of your products beyond the dollar value.  
 Take the regret out of impulse purchases through easy return policies.  
 Facebook reigns supreme as the most used social media platform.  
 Allow opportunities for discovery, sharing and conversation.  
 Know your customer – what do they think, feel and believe, and how can your brand purpose motivate them to engage with you?

Stories about a product in the news, magazine or newspaper still remain the most impactful in making purchase decisions when compared to traditional advertising.

The data in 5WPR's Consumer Culture Report was collected from an online survey that ran from Nov. 13 to 18, 2019, by MARU/Matchbox on behalf of 5WPR. The survey was conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,001 American adults aged 18+. The report includes unique consumer statistics on industries, buying behaviors by generation, social media marketing, corporate image, brand activism and more.

FRESH
TOMATOES

the best of nature™

MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
& PACK YOUR BAGS!

February 27-29, 2020

SEPC's Southern Exposure 2020  
 Tampa Convention Center  
 Tampa, FL  
[www.seproducecouncil.com](http://www.seproducecouncil.com)  
**Come see the Lipman team at booth #436!**

April 26-28, 2020

Women's Fresh Perspectives Conference  
 Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa  
 San Antonio, TX  
[www.centerforgrowingtalent.org](http://www.centerforgrowingtalent.org)

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