



MARKET UPDATE

Round Tomatoes: With Mexico's volume improving and Florida farms running daily, round tomato availability is one of the brighter spots of the week. Demand has strongly shifted to larger retail sizing which has limited demand for anything below a 4x5 and caused most FL growers to focus on crown picks and harvest little to no 2nd and 3rd picks. With extremely light foodservice demand, sizing flexibility at retail would impact supply in a positive way. Quality is great in FL and has improved significantly in Mexico as farms get a little further past the Winter's bad weather.

Roma Tomatoes: Similar to rounds, Florida's total harvest numbers are lighter than they have been. Sizing is on the smaller side on newer harvests, which really makes J/XL product short. Quality has been vice nice though. West Mexico farms are working existing acreage as well as breaking into new Spring plantings. Supply should continue to improve in Mexico but adequate availability will be determined by the currently super-strong consumer demand.

Grape Tomatoes: Both Florida and Mexico's grape tomato production are steady this week. With retail demand up and foodservice demand down, most product is being packed in clamshells. Quality is good from all areas.

Bell Peppers: Pepper availability in FL is about the same as last week, but the extreme demand situation is overwhelming to the light supply that's available. Spring crops should come online in various areas (South FL, Plant City, Central FL) over the next 10-14 days providing at least some relief. Meanwhile, there's very little coming from MX and not much more to come until the CA desert starts in April. XL and larger sizing are especially tight as most of the current harvests are from older plantings and the fruit has sized down. Quality reports are mixed from both FL and Mexico.

Cucumbers: Supply is extremely short in MX due to the weather disruptions encountered this winter. Sinaloa crops took a big hit from the rains and are

extremely limited in supply. It looks to be another 2-3 weeks until Sonora crops have significant volume so there's an extreme shortage with or without the increased retail demand. Honduras is down to mostly offgrades and sizes now and unfortunately, FL crops are slow to come online. We expect it to be at least 10-14 days before there's any significant volume out of FL and another few days for it to fill the pipeline.

Green Beans: Florida's supply of green beans is pretty steady and should continue to be so through Easter, weather permitting. Some growers could see wind effects on harvests over the next week (russetting) but that should clean up as they get through those plantings. In the West, Sinaloa's volume has been light this week, but should pick up next week. No issues on quality at this time, but there are quotes on #2 product which indicates there could be some mixed quality out there.

Summer Squash: Mexico's squash supply continues to be hit and miss and a majority of what little that's coming from the remaining Sinaloa crops won't make retail grade. Some new crops in Hermosillo are slowly coming on, but there's quality issues on the fruit, sizing is varied and volume is still very limited. Overall supply in the West should begin to balance out and has the potential to increase by the end of the month. With pollination, yield, and wind issues, Florida's supply is short on yellow but fairly good on zucchini. It'll be another 2 weeks until Plant City starts and there's significant volume in the East.

Eggplant: The demand exceeds supply scenario continues on eggplant. Cooler weather, rains, and skips in production have minimized Mexico's volume. With gloomy weather in the growing areas for 11 of the last 14 days, product will continue to be short for at least a few more weeks. Unfortunately, Florida's availability also continues to be very limited on eggplant and quality is just okay. Plant City should come on with some product in 3-4 weeks, but we're hearing acreage will be down due to last Fall's rock bottom market prices.

Mini Sweet Peppers: Mainland Mexico's production of mini sweets

has lightened up this week while demand has strengthened. As usual, when things get snug, there is more greening on arrivals.

Chili Peppers: Overall chili pepper availability remains snug for a number of factors: 1) Lenten season demand, 2) weather in Sinaloa and Sonora, 3) prior disease issues in the fields, 4) newer plantings going through weather and fighting off disease issues, and 5) the Sinaloa crop ending sooner than normal. The Sonora crop will limp along for the Spring, and we expect to see hit and miss quality for the remainder of the season. As South Florida winds down and demand gets stronger, there's not going to be a lot of help in Florida until Plant City gets up and running in 3-4 weeks.

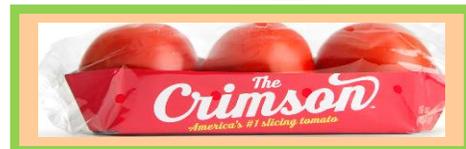
Hard Squash: Hard squash is in transition mode, and it's a bumpy ride. Acorn was becoming stable but is now firming up. Butternut harvests are moving to newer blocks out of Sonora but yield reports are not good. Spaghetti has gotten very snug this week, especially on anything with size. New blocks are set to start next week which should help as quality allows. Quality is great on acorn but subpar to good on butternut and spaghetti- lots of wind scarring, mechanical damage, and pin mold/pitting. Eastern supply is down to a few butternut from Honduras with no major supply expected until GA starts in May.

Colored Bell Peppers: Colored bell peppers are very snug this week due to various scenarios in the growing areas. Mexico is in a natural downcycle of production. Some crops in Northern areas were affected by bloom drop from the freeze-near freeze a few months back. Add a few days of cool temperatures and some growers packing at the green stage when markets were hot previously and supply has become short. Canada is just starting and does not have orange bells yet. More growers will begin over the next few weeks but it will be another 2-3 weeks before Canada is a factor. Another factor in the short supply is that there's basically no air freight coming in from Europe, etc., so what normally comes from Israel, Spain, & Holland is not arriving to help with supply.

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KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

40% of Shoppers Report Changing Produce Purchases Due to Coronavirus

By: Ashley Nickle, www.thepacker.com, March 13, 2020

More than 40% of consumers say they are changing their fresh produce purchasing because of the spread of the new coronavirus, COVID-19, according to a new survey commissioned by The Packer. The survey polled more than 1,000 people on March 12 to get a better understanding of how shoppers are adjusting grocery shopping behaviors during the pandemic.

Nearly 20% of people said they are buying less fresh produce now and more frozen fruits and vegetables, and about 12% said they are buying less fresh produce and more canned. Roughly 14% said they are buying more fresh produce to try and be healthier in case they are exposed to the coronavirus. About 12% are buying more packaged fresh produce and less bulk to ensure that other shoppers hadn't been touching the product while it was on display — although health officials have said there is no known transmission via food products.

Among consumers who said they are changing their fresh produce purchasing, 50% said they are concerned about people touching the produce on display. Thirty percent of the group said they are concerned about relying on fresh instead of stocking up with frozen because of the uncertainty generated by the coronavirus spread.

Online grocery

Nearly 70% of survey respondents said they are not using online grocery services more now because of the coronavirus, but 13% said they are doing so, and another 18% said they plan to use either grocery pickup or delivery more because of the pandemic. Seven percent of the group said their store doesn't have those options and they plan to switch to another store that does — at least for a while. Another 20% of shoppers said their store does offer grocery pickup and delivery and they plan to use those services more.

Spending in-store and out

Twenty-one percent of shoppers said they are spending more on groceries as more news comes out around the coronavirus, while 11% said they are spending less, and 68% say their grocery spending has not changed. However, a much larger percentage of the survey respondents plan to make some changes in the amount of food they consume outside the home. Forty-eight percent said they won't go to restaurants as frequently until the pandemic is over.

Panic factor

Shoppers rated their level of concern about the coronavirus on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not concerned at all," and 5 being "not leaving my house until this is over." Almost 40% of consumers put themselves in the middle. Another roughly 40% listed themselves as leaning one way or the other, 2 or 4. The margins — 1 and 5 — each got 10% of the vote.

Events that have prompted consumers to become more concerned about the coronavirus include the World Health Organization declaring it a pandemic (31%), school closures and event cancellations near them (27%), and the NCAA March Madness getting canceled and NBA season suspended (9%). Comments on the question showed a wide range of other sources of concern, from bans on large gatherings to the federal government's response to the stock market dropping.

What retailers can do

Forty percent of survey respondents said they don't need any communication from their grocery store regarding the coronavirus, but the majority did ask for information. Thirty-one percent said they want "information about what precautions the company is taking with employees, food handling, any changes with store hours or online services, etc." About 28% percent said they'd be open to "information from health authorities, precautions the grocery store is taking to keep people safe, updates on any purchase limits on certain items — pretty much give me all the information you have so I know you're on top of things."



TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*Continuing its downward descent for the 10th week in a row, the National Diesel Average fell \$.08, which puts the price at \$2.73 per gallon.

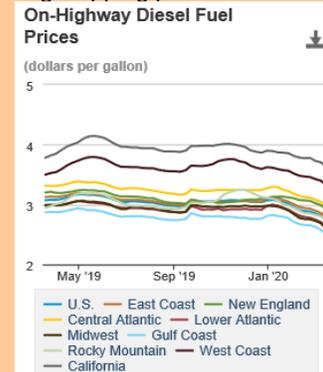
*The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.34 lower than the same time last year.

*All regions of the country reported price declines ranging from \$.06-\$.10 per gallon. The Midwest's fuel price dropped the most, and is down \$.10.

*California still tops the charts at \$3.63 per gallon while the Gulf Coast remains the low-price leader at \$2.50 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price fell sharply again this week (down 26.6%), moving from \$34.36 to \$25.22 per barrel.

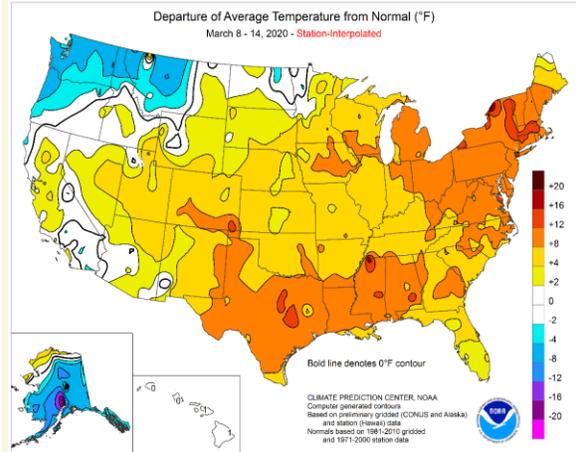
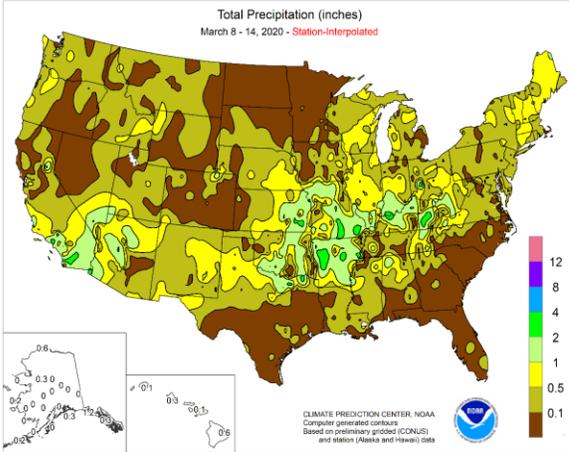
*Transportation availability has changed quickly as demand for food and consumables has skyrocketed. Trucks are slightly to moderately short at most of the tomato and truck veg shipping points.



Source: Energy Information Administration

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS!

April 26-28, 2020- postponed
 Women's Fresh Perspectives-San Antonio, TX
www.centerforgrowingtalent.org

April 30-May 2, 2020- now cancelled
 Viva Fresh- San Antonio, TX
www.vivafreshexpo.com

May 29-30, 2020- rescheduled to Aug 21-22, 2020
 West Coast Produce Expo- Palm Desert CA
www.westcoastproduceexpo.com

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Questions or comments about the newsletter?
 Contact: joanna.hazel@lipmanfamilyfarms.com

PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



MARCH CALENDAR

- All Month
- National Sauce Month
- March 22nd-28th**
- National Agriculture Week
- March 23rd**
- National Chip and Dip Day
- National Tamale Day
- March 24th**
- National Agriculture Day
- March 28th**
- Something on a Stick Day

Estero, FL Weather

Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
Mar 21	Mar 22	Mar 23	Mar 24	Mar 25
86° F	85° F	85° F	85° F	85° F
67° F	68° F	67° F	68° F	69° F
ENE 8 MPH	ESE 7 MPH	ESE 6 MPH	SW 6 MPH	SSE 10 MPH



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The
Crimson™
America's #1 slicing beefsteak tomato

INTRODUCING

FULL FLAVOR
Delicious, juicy homegrown flavor.

LONGER LASTING
Solid, meaty center. Holds body when ripened.

DEEP RED COLOR
Consistent shape. Deep red color inside and out.

IN-STORE SUPPORT
Ask about our consumer marketing campaign. It's designed to sell.

AVAILABILITY
Available in Florida now through the end of May.



Pack Features	Pack Size	Count	Cases Per Pallet	Cases Per Load	UPC
Packed in a <u>panta</u> pack to protect fruit from shifting and bruising during transit.	15 <u>lb</u>	18-28ct per case	100	2400	3151

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