MARKET UPDATE

Round Tomatoes: Ruskin/Palmetto growers are winding down, with some finishing final picks this week and others calling it quits next week. Rain from 7-10 days ago and high heat have caused quality concerns, with scarring, some softness, and less travel legs on the fruit from some farms. Lipman is now finished with crowns, but will pick 2nd's next week, with maybe a few stragglers after that. Quality from our farms was some of the best available this week. Looking ahead, South Carolina will start around June 1st, which will help ease the late transition into Quincy, FL/South GA. A few small players in Quincy are rumored to start up over the weekend, but the bigger operations are reporting start dates ranging from June 1-15. In the West, Mainland Mexico's volume and quality are declining, as they approach the end of the season. New crops in Eastern Mexico and Baja are underway and should begin to bring more volume to the table. These areas (and the short-lived So Cal mature green deal) will hold the fort down until California's Central Valley gets up and running.

Roma Tomatoes: Romas are only in a few hands in the Ruskin/Palmetto area, with Lipman's being one of those. We'll have romas for up to 2 more weeks, while most other shippers will be done this week or next. There will be a few romas out of Quincy in early-mid June, but numbers won't be significant in the East until regional deals get rolling in July. The Western roma situation is similar to rounds: newer crops in Eastern Mexico and Baja are beginning to come on with more volumes while Mainland farms are winding down. Heat has created puffiness in some harvests, but there is good-quality fruit available.

Grape Tomatoes: Grape tomato volumes and quality have been up and down from Ruskin/Palmetto as most growers are nearing the end of the season and are on late picks that have seen rain and heat. Splits and softness are the common issues and it's taking a toll on packouts. South Carolina grapes will start around June 1st and Quincy/ South GA should see a few in 7-10 days. The West has had a tough go with grapes for the last few weeks, but Baja's new crops have come on strong, providing better quality and volume than what's coming from the Mainland.

Bell Peppers: Although Plant City is still in the pepper game with limited volume, they will wind down over the next few weeks. Quality from this area has been suspect with bruising and scarring from prior weather. Fortunately, Georgia is now going strong on bells with good volumes and quality reports. There's not a lot of choice fruit in GA yet, as most farms are in crown picks. The West is also enjoying good supply as the Coachella area peaks with very nice quality and Mexico continues to cross product. Quality is still fairly good from Mexico, but shelf life will likely become an issue soon as tired plants and heat affect quality.

Cucumbers: Georgia is now carrying the East on cucs. New crops and an increase in acreage are bringing strong numbers. Quality is really pretty good, but there have been a few reports of mis-shape and scarring to weed through. Nogales production is still going strong and quality is decent. Shippers are projecting harvests through early June so we don't expect a transition gap. Baja's numbers were light this week due to rain A couple more shippers are expected to start next week and better weather is on the way, so volume should rebound Quality has been strong from Baja so far but the recent rain has potential to bring problems.

Summer Squash: There's plenty of squash in the East this week, as Plant City is still rolling, Georgia is in full production, and some fruit is now showing up in the Carolinas. Plant City's quality is lesser than other areas, although they do have some new plantings. Georgia's fruit is nice despite some scarring on yellow squash. The West also has multiple areas going (Mainland Mexico and Santa Maria, CA) with ample volume to meet market needs. Baja farms will also get going over the next 7-10 days.

Eggplant: Short and sweet- eggplant is a tough item this week. There's very little production left in Plant City and quality is fair to poor on what's there. Georgia should start in 7-10 days, which will finally close the gap in Eastern supply. The Western transition from Mainland Mexico to the California desert is very slow-going. Supply in Nogales is diminishing daily and will wrap up over the next few days. Cool and rainy weather in Thermal/ Coachella, CA has really slowed new crops and limited volume. Look for this area to come with more volume as the weather improves.

Green Beans: Despite various transitions and weather issues in the West, there are enough areas in Mexico and California going to meet market demand. In the East, Georgia crops are coming on strong with good volumes and quality. This should carry on for 4-5 weeks unless ugly weather plays a part. Eastern NC is also on tap to start in the next 2 weeks.

Organic Squash: Organic squash supply in Nogales has fallen off rather quickly, especially on zucchini. With Baja's new crop numbers on the light side and only a few California farms just starting, organic squash is snug this week. Expect availability to improve over the next 7-10 days though, as more growers add to the mix. The East is beginning to see a little early product from the Carolinas, but most of the regional organic deals won't begin until the first or second week in June.

Organic Cucumbers: Despite some growers seeing sharp declines in organic cuc volume, there's still plenty of product in Nogales this week. Look for Western production to shift to Baja and California over the next few weeks.

Organic Grape Tomatoes: Organic grape tomatoes are available in both Nogales and Baja this week, but quality is poor in Nogales, shifting the demand over to Baja. Fruit from new Baja crops is nice and can travel. Nogales' product… not so much.

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Look for Transportation Facts on Page 2 this week!

FROM THE FARM

USDA Forecasts Strong Year for Vegetables

By: Carol Miller, www.growingproduce.com, May 23, 2019

USDA predicts vegetable producers will have a good year in its recently released **Vegetables and Pulses Outlook** report.

In one section of the 45-page report, it makes several forecasts for U.S. vegetables. Here's a quick overview.

Acres Harvested. The number of fresh vegetable acres harvested in 2019 will rebound from 2018's historic low, rising to 1,552,000 acres from 1,163,000. Processed vegetables will also see a rebound, but a very small one. USDA predicts growers will harvest about 1,190,000 of vegetables bound for processing, compared with 2018's 1,163,000 acres harvested.

Production. The amount of harvested fresh vegetables in cwt will also rise, from 359 cwt to 385 cwt. Processing vegetables are forecasted to be slightly lower than 2018 (from 357 cwt to 354 cwt).

Crop Value. Crop values and production often follow the numbers for acres harvested, so it's no surprise the fresh vegetable industry will see a rebound in value from 2018. It will still fall short of 2017's levels, however. In 2017, fresh vegetables hit a peak of close to $12 billion. That fell to $10.1 billion last year and it's expected to grow to $10.9 billion. Processing vegetables will likely remain flat, USDA predicts. It will rise from $1.72 billion to $1.78 billion.

Imports. Fresh vegetable imports will likely drop slightly in 2019, from $7.68 billion to $7.63 billion. Expect a similar story in processed vegetables, where imports will drop to $2.7 billion from last year's $2.8 billion.

Exports. And the good news for fresh vegetables continues with exports. U.S. fresh vegetable export levels will likely rise from $2.2 billion to $2.4 billion. Processing vegetables, however, will fall off from $1.43 billion in 2018 to this year's $1.37 billion.

One reason 2018's fresh vegetable numbers fell so far was due to how hard the foodborne outbreaks hit leafy greens. Leafy greens is one of the largest vegetable groups and so any surges or dips it experiences tend to resonate throughout the industry.

Onions Off to a Slow Start

Not all 2019 vegetable production forecasts are so rosy. Onions are off to a slow start. USDA says now rain amounts and high temperatures in early 2019 in key onion-producing regions caused the delayed plantings.

That slow start follows a rising prices trend, which USDA says started at the end of 2018. January 2019 prices hit the highest point in eight years — $1.06 per pound. With a slow start and likely lower harvest later in the year, prices will likely stay elevated throughout 2019.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*The national diesel average remained stable this week at $3.16 per gallon.

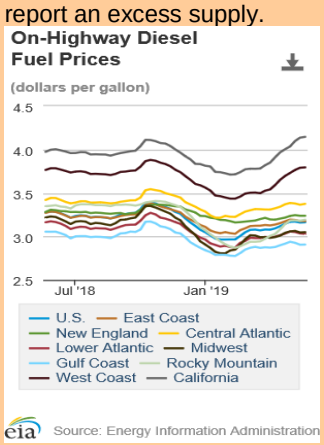
* The average price for a gallon of diesel is $.01 less than the same time last year.

* Prices rose less than $.01 per gallon in most reporting areas, but the Lower Atlantic and West Coast reported very slight price declines.

*California continues to have the highest diesel prices in the country at $4.14 per gallon while the Gulf Coast is the low-price leader at $2.91 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil remained relatively steady this week (up .1%). Pricing moved from $62.87 to $62.99 per barrel.

*The truck shortage in Central and South Florida continues this week. As Eastern North Carolina farms get up and running, they are also coming up a bit shy on transportation. The West seems to be where the trucks are, as both Mexico/Texas crossings and California report an excess supply.



LIPMAN family farms®

Change is here, and we are ready for it! We look forward to showcasing some new and exciting product offerings for the very first time at this year's **United Fresh Conference & Expo**, including our expanded fresh-cut line and our new greenhouse-grown mini sweet peppers. You can also get a peek at the brand new Crimson Grape tomato—a sweet, delicious taste sensation with a unique look and fantastic shelf life. Keep it simple and look for the dimple!

Visit us at United Fresh June 10-12 in Chicago, IL, booth # 2017 to learn more. See you there!

PRODUCE BAROMETER

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

MAY CALENDAR

May All Month
Military Appreciation Month
National Salad Month
May 24th
National Don't Fry Day
May 25th
National Brown-Bag-It Day
May 28th
National Hamburger Day
May 29th
Senior Health & Fitness Day

Quincy, FL Weather

Fri May 24	Sat May 25	Sun May 26	Mon May 27	Tue May 28
97°F	99°F	99°F	99°F	98°F
73°F	75°F	76°F	76°F	78°F
ESE 3 MPH	SW 3 MPH	SSW 4 MPH	WNW 5 MPH	NNW 6 MPH

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

Study Explores How "Shopping Guilt" Affects Purchases

By: Ashley Nickle, www.thepacker.com , May 20, 2019

Crestline Custom Promotional Products recently surveyed 2,100 consumers in 25 major cities and found that the majority say they care about company behavior and report having changed their buying habits when they found out a company was harming the environment or treating employees badly.

Crestline asked shoppers which issues matter most to them, rated from 1 to 5 from not important to extremely important. The top options selected were non-toxic (4.09), cruelty-free/not tested on animals (3.68) and antibiotic/hormone-free (3.53).

Among the attributes sometimes associated with produce department items were no artificial ingredients (3.46), locally sourced (3.26) and fair trade (3.18). The last two items on the list were non-GMO (2.98) and organic (2.96).

The survey also prompted respondents to rate what actions make them feel guilty. The top three were leaving the light on in an empty room, throwing something recyclable in the trash, and buying from a company that supports political causes they oppose.

Sustainability

Among the shoppers surveyed, 83.2% said they are making an effort to reduce waste, per the report.
More than 48% said they always or usually use reusable shopping bags; only 24% said they rarely or never use reusable bags.

More than 63% of shoppers reported having changed their buying habits when they learned a business was harming the environment, while 59.4% said they made changes after learning a business was paying employees low wages or subjecting them to harsh working conditions.

Committing to paying attention

Crestline queried shoppers on whether they agree with the following statement: "I wish I could just buy products I like without feeling guilty or being judged." More than 45% of the respondents agreed, and less than 25% disagreed. Even so, consumers maintained they would rather be aware what is happening so they can adjust their purchases accordingly.

More than 80% indicated they would want to know if a company that makes one of their favorite products was polluting the environment, mistreating workers or behaving unethically so they could stop supporting that business.

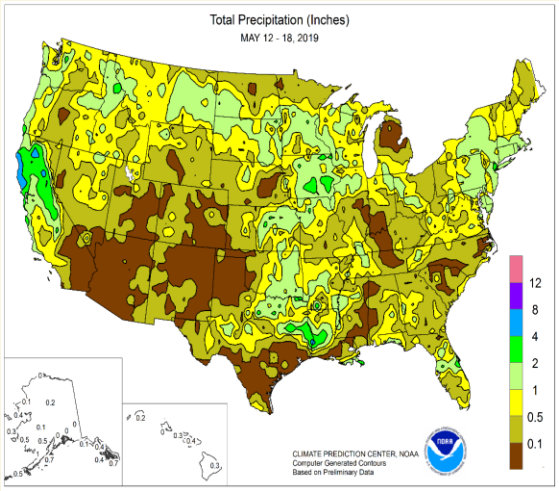
Shopper segments

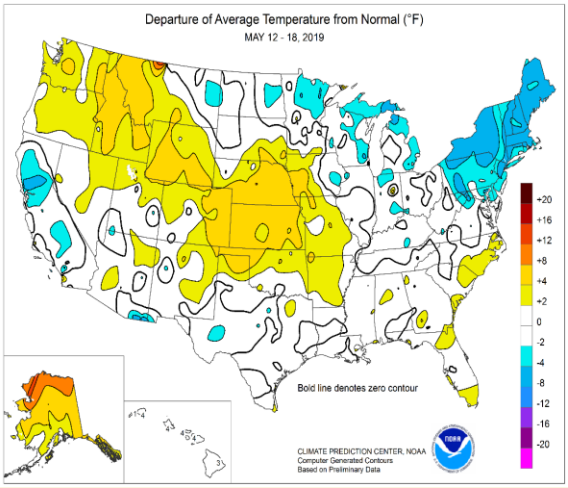
Crestline reported that its survey respondents ranged in age from 18 to 86 and indicated 47.1% were men and 52.9% were women.

The firm also took note of the political leanings of respondents, reporting that 25.8% identified as "conservative" or "lean conservative," 46.7% identified as "liberal" or "lean liberal," and 27.5% identified as "moderate/independent." Crestline found that women, liberals and people with more education were more likely to report caring about corporate social responsibility. Location was also a significant factor, but age was not, according to the survey results.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations





RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Restaurants are Tapping into a Seasoned Labor Pool

www.restaurant.org , May 22, 2019

With the economic expansion into its tenth year, businesses across many industries are finding it increasingly difficult to compete for employees in a tightening labor market. In addition to these challenges, the restaurant industry was also impacted by longer-term structural changes in the labor force in recent years. Most notably among these developments was the sharp and steady decline in the teenage labor pool.

To cope with a shallow labor pool, many restaurants are turning to more seasoned workers to fill positions. In fact, older adults were the fastest-growing age cohort of restaurant employees in recent years. The number of adults age 55 or older working in the restaurant industry jumped 70 percent between 2007 and 2018 – an increase of 400,000 people.

Although their overall numbers are still relatively small, older adults are becoming an increasingly important component of the restaurant workforce. Currently, there are nearly two teenage restaurant workers for every employee age 55 or older. In 2007, teenagers outnumbered the 55-plus cohort by three to one.

Looking ahead, older adults are expected to be the fastest-growing component of the U.S. labor force over the next several years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicts that an additional 5.3 million adults age 65 or older will enter the labor force between 2016 and 2026.

This trend will be driven both by population growth of this age group as well as an increase in their labor force participation rate. BLS predicts that approximately 22 percent of the 65-plus cohort will be in the labor force by 2026, up from the current level of 19.6 percent and the highest participation rate since the 1950s.

With older adults projected to make up a larger share of the U.S. labor force, it is likely that the composition of the restaurant industry workforce will also continue to evolve.