



## MARKET UPDATE

**Round Tomatoes:** The Palmetto/Ruskin crops haven't provided the volume push this year that we usually see during their season. Multiple factors contribute to that- a little less acreage, less harvests due to less foodservice demand, etc. but what we're seeing now is that recent heat has brought crops along ahead of schedule. Some shippers report to be 1-2 weeks ahead of where they usually are this time of year and are already winding down. Of course, there are others that still have another couple weeks of crown picks but volume and sizing will naturally begin to drop off through the rest of the season. Eastern production will transition to Quincy and South Carolina, which are both on tap to start during the week of Memorial Day. Volume remains light in the West this week but new crops in Baja, Eastern Mexico and the CA desert will get started in varying degrees next week.

**Roma Tomatoes:** Florida's roma volume is starting to lighten up as R/P moves into the downturn of the season. However, current harvests have mostly yielded jumbos and quality is very nice. When P/R finishes up in a few weeks, roma availability will be very limited in the East until the TN and NC mountain areas get started in July. Quincy and SC's acreage is very minimal, as normal weather patterns this time of year are not conducive to productive roma crops. Western markets will begin to see more romas out of Mexico over the next several weeks as summer crops start in both Baja and the Mainland. CA expects to get onboard in mid-late June.

**Grape Tomatoes:** Grape tomato quality, yields and packouts are strong in Florida's R/P area and should continue to be for the next few weeks. Mexico's production is in transition with most Mainland growers finishing up this month as Baja farms start to get their feet wet.

**Bell Peppers:** The challenges with bell pepper supply look to continue for at least another week. FL's availability is pretty much limited to pallet volumes as Plant City works the light acreage planted this year. South FL is still shipping what they can, but quality and sizing are no longer appropriate for retail business. Some relief is on the way, as Georgia should start in a very light way this weekend and have decent volumes in another 7-10

days. With Mexico's supply and quality waning quickly as the season winds down, CA's Coachella pepper is in high demand. Volume is peaking right now and quality is good, but larger sizing moves fast. Although there will be some ups and downs in availability, the CA desert will be the primary source of supply in the west until the Bakersfield area comes along in mid to late June.

**Cucumbers:** Northern Mainland Mexico has plenty of cucs available and there's still some coming out of Sinaloa. Baja already has 3 shippers going and they'll pick up in volume over the next couple of weeks. Quality out of both areas has been strong but we'll start seeing a decline in quality out of Mainland due to high temperatures. Eastern cucumber production is in transition as FL volumes lighten up and GA farms get started.

**Green Beans:** Both GA and north FL have come on with good volumes, yields, and quality so beans are in good shape in the East this week. The West also has plenty of product with both Guasave and the CA desert harvesting stronger numbers.

**Summer Squash:** Eastern squash is still available in Plant City but the bulk of the volume is coming out of GA now. Quality has improved from last week, but there are still some lots and shippers with issues on yellow. In the West, the northern growing areas in Mainland Mexico are getting hit with extreme heat. Supplies are down slightly and we may see residual effects for the next couple of weeks. However, new crops have started in the Baja and Fresno, CA areas and they expect volume to increase over the next 2 weeks. The Santa Maria area is not far behind, with a projected start date in 10-14 days.

**Chili Peppers:** Hot peppers have now made it through the first cycle in Sonora and are one week closer to the season's end in Sinaloa. Although Sonora's crops are not without challenges, the quality is generally better than Sinaloa's. As things wind down further, look for specialty pepper (habaneros, fresnos, etc.) to become scarce and quality on thinner-walled chilies like Anaheim and poblanos to decline. As growing areas begin to transition, we're seeing poblanos in Baja but nothing yet from CA domestic deals.

**Eggplant:** Eggplant is still a very hot commodity. Mexico is down to #2 fruit and the CA desert has yet to get rolling. A few growers have tried to start already, but the lack of sizing needed for retail business has held them back. We should begin to see some of the desert's round, cannonball-shaped eggs next week. Although supply remains very short in the East, there have been a few more eggs coming out of Plant City this week. South FL is harvesting what they can since the market conditions are favorable but that should wrap up over the next week or two. We're still 3 weeks away from GA.

**Hard Squash:** A large portion of Mexico's hard squash harvests are winding down with acorn already done and spaghetti close behind. Nogales will move into a storage program, as is normal for this time of year, and expects to have product available through May. We generally see quality concerns escalate during this time frame and look forward to the CA crop starting in late May/early June. The East has a few hard squash from small local deals in Florida, but will mostly depend on Mexico's storage crops and the remaining Honduran imports until GA has fruit in June.

**Colored Bell Peppers:** As production transitions from Spring to Summer crops, colored bell pepper volume is limited in Mexico, especially on orange. We'll continue to see some fruit until new crops begin in June, but sizing, color and quality options will vary until then. Canada's production has been in a downcycle but is on the way back up and should be strong next week with better sizing and volume available, particularly on red and orange.

**Organic Veg:** Organic green bells remain very snug as volume and quality continue to fall off in Nogales. Although the CA desert has fruit, there's only one grower with significant volume. We should see a bit more fruit in the next few weeks, but supply will be snug until Bakersfield is in business in a month. Cucumbers are holding their own with a steady stream of product. Squash numbers are light this week, particularly on yellow. Volume has dropped off dramatically as fields wind down but new Baja crops should start up over the next week or so.

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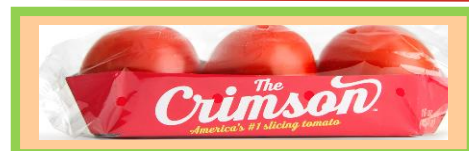
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## KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

### Report: Organic Produce Sales Jump 22 Percent in March

[www.theshelbyreport.com](http://www.theshelbyreport.com), April 30, 2020

Total organic fresh produce sales were up 22 percent for March, with overall first quarter sales up eight percent in retail conditions unlike any ever experienced in the modern era of grocery retailing, according to the 2020 Q1 Organic Produce Performance Report released exclusively by the Organic Produce Network and Category Partners.

Unprecedented consumer purchasing behavior across the United States because of COVID-19 emptied store shelves, resulting in widespread out-of-stock conditions. In March, total organic dollars were up 22 percent from March of last year and significantly above the dollar increase of January and February of this year, which stood at 1.8 percent. March 2020 organic sales were \$546.8 million, with first quarter organic fresh produce sales at \$1.582 billion.

Data shows organic fruits and vegetables out-performed conventional products in produce departments the first three months of the year, with dollar sales of organic fruits and vegetables increased by 8 percent, and volume up by 10 percent. Conventional fruits and vegetables grew by 6.6 percent in dollars and 7.7 percent in volume.

The 2020 Q1 Organic Produce Performance Report utilized Nielsen retail scan data covering total food sales and outlets in the United States over the past 13 weeks, with an extra examination on March sales.

"Organic fresh produce sales in the first quarter of the year were strong, and the impact of COVID-19 in March pushed numbers even more," said Matt Seeley, CEO of the Organic Produce Network. "And we continue to see organic fresh produce sales outpace the dollar and volume growth rate of conventional fresh produce. The West continues to be the strongest region in the US for organic performance, with first quarter 2020 ACV performance 34 percent the U.S. average."

The 2020 Q1 report indicates that the West and Northeast shared the greatest increase in organic dollars. Moving forward, the largest opportunity for organic growth appears to be in the Midwest and South regions. Steve Lutz, SVP of insights and innovation at Category Partners, said a challenge and opportunity for the industry is in broadening the base of organic retail volume.

"What we see in the Nielsen data is that organic produce at retail is concentrated within fewer categories than conventional produce, especially in the winter months when locally produced organic products are less available," Lutz said. "The top 10 organic categories in produce drive 59 percent of dollars and 71 percent of volume in Q1. These same categories contribute only 42 percent of total conventional sales and 52 percent of volume."

Packaged salads, apples and bananas generated the highest dollar growth in organic dollars in the first quarter, generating over 35 percent of total organic produce dollar growth. In terms of volume, bananas, carrots and apples lead, generating 44 percent of total organic volume, with bananas increasing volume growth by a remarkable 19.5 percent.

Seeley said he believes the data is indicative of the importance of organic produce, perhaps even more in these uncharted times.

"Our nation is understanding the importance of the selfless dedication the farming and grocery industry is doing day in and day out," he said. "Consumers are looking for items they trust during these uncertain times and organic fresh produce is a healthy and safe option for all consumers."



#### TRANSPORTATION FACTS

\*For the 17<sup>th</sup> week in a row, the National Diesel Average price declined, moving from \$2.44 to \$2.40 over the past seven days.

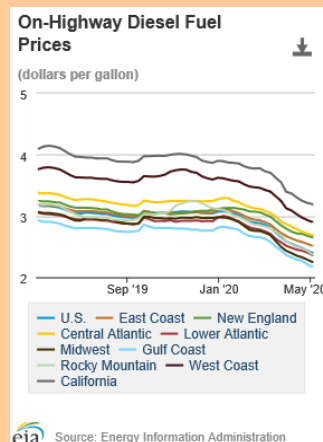
\*The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.77 lower than the same time last year.

\*All regions of the country reported price declines ranging from \$.02-\$.06 per gallon. The Rocky Mountains and the West Coast had the most significant drops of \$.06 and \$.05 per gallon, respectively.

\*As usual, California has the highest price at \$3.19 per gallon while the Gulf Coast remains the low-price leader at \$2.17 per gallon.

\*The WTI Crude Oil price jumped 59% this week, moving from \$15.06 to \$23.99 per barrel.

\*Trucks are officially short in Central and South Florida this week while all other areas have adequate or a slight surplus in transportation.





# NEWS BITES

From Chef Wil

**A Look on the Bright Side:** As we move into warmer weather, we prepare our menus and offerings to adapt. Cold dishes with refreshing, summer fruits and vegetables, family-sized, large parties, and BBQ buffets are all the good things of summertime. You can almost smell the charcoal heating up!



## CAPRESE BRUSCHETTA DIP

### Recipe Highlights

- Lipman diced tomatoes
- Lipman diced cucumber
- Lipman diced red onion
- mozzarella pearls
- fresh basil
- olive oil
- balsamic vinegar



## @MENU\_DEVELOPERS

- Bruschetta has had 12% growth in QSR over the last four years (*Datassential*)
- "The caprese continues to evolve beyond the salad menu" - *US Foods*
- "Nearly ¾ of millennials named Italian food as their favorite cuisine" - *New York Post*

## ROASTED CORN & CUCUMBER PICO

### Recipe Highlights

- roasted corn, off the cob
- Lipman diced tomatoes
- Lipman diced yellow or red onion
- Lipman diced jalapeno
- Lipman diced cucumber
- fresh cilantro
- fresh lime juice

- Roasted corn has had a 29.7% growth across menus over the last four years (*Datassential*)



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## PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



## MAY CALENDAR

All Month

National Salsa Month

May 10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>

National Transportation Week

May 10<sup>th</sup>

Mother's Day

May 15<sup>th</sup>

National Pizza Party Day

National Slider Day

May 16<sup>th</sup>

National Barbecue Day

## Ruskin, FL Weather

Sat May 9	Sun May 10	Mon May 11	Tue May 12	Wed May 13
86°F	80°F	83°F	87°F	86°F
69°F	68°F	66°F	69°F	71°F
W 12 MPH	ENE 10 MPH	NNE 11 MPH	NE 11 MPH	ENE 12 MPH
	Precip 70%	Precip 40%	Precip 20%	Precip 30%



## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

### What Customers Want from Restaurants as They Reopen- Part 1

By: Danny Klein, [www.qsrmagazine.com](http://www.qsrmagazine.com), May 2020

The decision to reopen dining rooms or keep them closed, despite regulations lifting, is one restaurants have not taken lightly. While the pros and cons differ by brand and circumstance in states like Georgia, Texas, and Tennessee, the goal pretty much stays the same: Keep customers and employees safe. But what do soon-to-be guests want from restaurants? What are the questions operators must answer before greeting them?

VIPinsiders, a platform run by fifth-generation restaurateur Philipp Sitter, took a unique approach to answering these dilemmas. The company sent a mass poll through restaurants clients' email, text, and social sites; ran independent social media ads; and engaged with active Facebook groups. In about 24 hours, it received 8,511 responses. The result isn't information from politicians, doctors, and local governments, the company said, but rather the thoughts of everyday people who will actually open up their wallets in the coming days and weeks. "The results reflect a shocking number of expectations from diners including how much they are willing to spend and what type of restaurant marketing they will be receptive to moving forward," Sitter said in a statement.

#### **"What type of PPE do you want restaurants to use after reopening?"**

Gloves: 14.1 percent; Masks: 24 percent; Both: 61.9 percent

This seems a pretty standard reality for most.

#### **"How long would you like restaurant employees to use PPE?"**

30 days: 39.1 percent; 60 days: 20.8 percent; 90 days: 12.7 percent; Rest of the year: 12.1 percent; Indefinitely: 15.3 percent

It's pretty interesting more than 1,200 people believed restaurant employees should wear masks for the foreseeable future. That could turn into a hefty investment for multi-unit chains. Yet one they have no real choice but to shoulder. Some concepts have gotten creative with making their own in-store for first responders. Perhaps that might turn into making masks for their own employees. Regardless, it's a conversation operators are already having with suppliers—planning not just to equip workers today, but also developing plans to update, replace, and continue to provide as time goes on. The mask and glove conversation won't go away when the off-premises-restricted world does. In some states and local jurisdictions, face coverings are required by government officials; some employers require them, too. In all cases, those coverings worn by employees should be kept clean in accordance with CDC guidance and cleaned daily.

#### **"Are disposable, single-use menus important to you?"**

Yes: 58.7 percent; No: 41.3 percent

This might be a larger concern for full-service operators, those restaurants that bring menus to the table. Quick-service chains could, in theory, just take their menus off the dining-room floor and let people look solely at the menuboard. Or just have disposable to-go paper options for customers to grab if needed. Despite there being no evidence of coronavirus being transmitted by food or food packaging, it's still on guests' minds.

#### **"Is it important to you that a restaurant checks all guests and staff temperatures before dining?"**

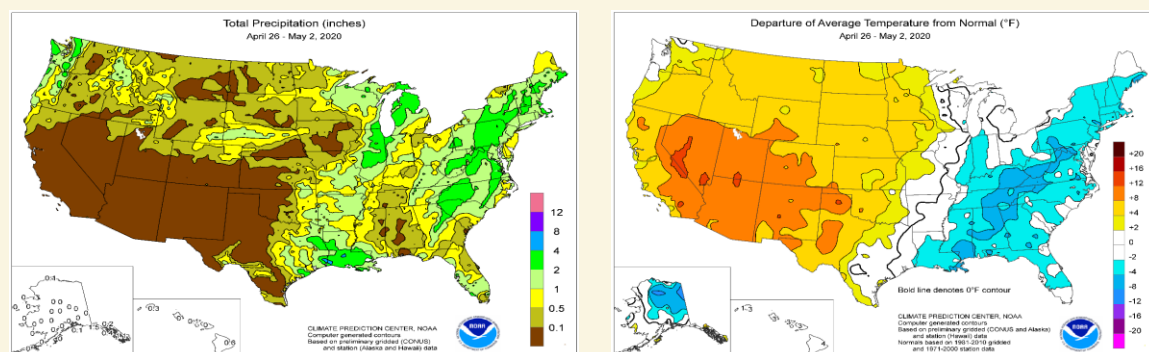
Yes: 46.3 percent; No: 53.7 percent

A recent Datassential study showed that 61 percent of customers said they would support having their temperature taken before dining out. Another 41 percent said they'd show proof of wellness. Although those numbers aren't small, they were the lowest on the company's list of options, falling behind 6 of more feet of distance (85 percent); customers sanitizing their hands upon entering (81 percent); customers at bar must have a seat (81 percent); must wait outside if waiting for a table (73 percent); seating by reservation only (69 percent); and no physical menus (65 percent).

*Continued on page 5*

## NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

### Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS...Continued

### What Customers Want from Restaurants as They Reopen- Part 1

By: Danny Klein, [www.qsrmagazine.com](http://www.qsrmagazine.com), May 2020

The employee part is a different story, though. A Houston restaurateur announced last week that it's instituting mandatory COVID-19 testing for all current employees. The company is working with a primary and urgent care microclinic operator. Additionally, the company is providing masks and gloves, and temperature screening employees as they arrive. It's rolling out paper menus, single-use condiments, and increasing space between tables in the dining rooms for guests.

On April 23, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission updated its guidance to address employer testing for COVID-19, noting that it is permissible during the pandemic under the ADA. The ADA requires that any mandatory medical test of employees be "job related and consistent with business necessity." Applying this standard to the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, employers may now take steps to determine if employees entering the workplace have COVID-19 because an individual with the virus will pose a direct threat to the health of others. Therefore, an employer may choose to administer COVID-19 testing to employees before they enter the workplace to determine if they have the virus. The CDC has not mandated taking an employee's temperature and any operator who chooses to do so should engage health officials first and adopt policies aligned with proper procedures. CDC guidance states the minimum temperature that indicates a fever is 100 degrees.

#### ***And the big question: "How often do you plan on dining out after restaurants reopen?"***

Same as before: 50.9 percent; Less than before: 45.9 percent; More than before: 3.2 percent

In sum, from where we stand today (in the middle of a pandemic) people remain wary of dining out and unsure what the future of social distancing holds. But this could change in a matter of days. Hopefully it will, for the better.

#### ***"When do you feel your normal dining-out routine will be back to normal?"***

Immediately: 14.5 percent; Few weeks: 16.3 percent; 30 days: 13.8 percent; 60 days: 17.3 percent; 90 days: 14.4 percent; End of the year: 16.7 percent; My dining routine has changed for good: 7 percent

This is really all over the place, as you might expect. It's the type of question restaurants need to be proactive with and drive the narrative.

Some thoughts:

**Curate a to-go picnic basket:** Maybe people are ready to go outside, but not sit in a crowded restaurant. A restaurant might offer a more attractive one-day option than another harrowing trip to the grocery store. The concept could compile its best, easy-to-eat options and a few refreshing beverages along with to-go containers, cups, and cutlery in a branded basket for a set price. "People are excited to enjoy the outdoors during these times, and now they can enjoy their favorite dishes from your restaurant, too," Rewards Network said.

**Build a themed menu:** If people are bingeing TV shows, or there's a highly touted launch coming up, restaurants could offer on-theme dishes from ingredients already in store for delivery and takeout. Rewards Network suggests raising the stakes and encouraging customers to share a photo of themselves enjoying their meal while watching their favorite show.

**Share your skills:** Present deconstructed versions of popular items, or cocktails, and go live on social media to host virtual cooking classes. Step-by-step and/or time-lapse cooking videos are also a great engagement tool for a restaurants' social media pages. Consumers can share their final creations and tag/follow a brand's page.

**Host a game night:** Cater to social engagement. Include bingo cards with a takeout/delivery order and then pick a night to host a virtual bingo game on Facebook or Instagram Live, Rewards Network offers. It could spur more off-premises business and become a weekly habit for guests looking for something different.

*This article has been edited for content and space and will be continued next week.*

<h3>MARK YOUR CALENDAR &amp; PACK YOUR BAGS?</h3>	
<p><b>June 15-19, 2020</b>          United Fresh LIVE!          Online Tradeshow and Conference          Registration is free.  <a href="http://www.unitedfreshlive.org">www.unitedfreshlive.org</a></p>	<p><b>CREATED BY LIPMAN FOR OUR VALUED CUSTOMERS</b></p> <p>Learn more about us @  <a href="http://www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com">www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com</a>  <a href="http://www.suntasticfresh.com">www.suntasticfresh.com</a></p> <p>Follow us on social media</p> <div> </div>
<p><b>October 15-17, 2020</b>          PMA's Fresh Summit          Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center          Dallas, TX  <a href="http://www.pma.com/events/freshsummit">www.pma.com/events/freshsummit</a></p>	<p>Questions or comments about the newsletter?          Contact: <a href="mailto:joanna.hazel@lipmanfamilyfarms.com">joanna.hazel@lipmanfamilyfarms.com</a></p>