MARKET UPDATE

Round Tomatoes: Overall, Florida’s round tomato volumes are coming in a little lighter this week due to bloom drop from prior colder weather, but supply is adequate. Lipman will continue to harvest in Naples for the next few weeks, but will dabble in the new Estero fields before the month ends. With a mix of crown and 2nd picks, quality is good and the sizing diameter is at normal levels. West Mexico is still providing good volumes of both mature green and vine-ripe fruit which should continue through March, barring any inclement weather. Availability is stronger on larger sizes and quality remains good.

Roma Tomatoes: Florida’s roma production is holding steady in the southern part of the state. As with rounds, we will transition to the Estero farms at the end of the month while the majority of growers will move ahead to Palmetto Rusk. Overall quality is good, despite some hit or miss concerns by grower/lot. Romas are still readily available out of West Mexico, with mostly J and XL fruit this week. New growing areas in Sonora are on tap to start gradually over the next few weeks. With some overlap in the seasons, we expect a smooth transition.

Grape Tomatoes: Grape tomato availability in the East has tightened up for two reasons: 1) bloom drop from a cold weather spell 3-4 weeks ago, and 2) some growers walking away from older plantings as market prices stayed below profitable levels. With less acreage in production, we’ll see similar volumes for the next few weeks until the transition to new growing areas takes place. Quality is mostly good and has been especially nice from our early picks in Estero. Mexico’s grape volume has lightened up significantly this week as some growers are between sets. The last of the new blocks in Sinaloa will come online in 10-14 days and should take us through April.

Cherry Tomatoes: Florida’s cherry tomato production is also down this week for the same reasons as grapes. There are only a handful of cherry tomatoes coming out of Mexico and quality is fair, at best.

Bell Peppers: Florida’s pepper numbers are similar to last week’s light to moderate. With older crops still in play and some new plantings beginning, there’s a good mix of sizing available with mostly good quality. We look for production to stay around the same levels until increased acreage of new crops starts in both South Florida and Plant City in a few weeks. As for Mexico, Sinaloa’s production of larger #1 fruit has declined because the plants are getting older. We’re also starting to see quality issues as many growers didn’t take care of the plants because the market was too cheap for so long. Production will continue to slow down and the California desert isn’t scheduled to start until late April.

Cucumbers: Honduras is flushing this week with strong picks from the last of the new fields for the season. Depending on markets, they could go through the rest of March before calling it quits. However, Florida farms are gradually coming online and volume is picking up. Quality is good from both areas, but the Florida product definitely trumps on the freshness factor. Northern Mexico’s Spring crops are picking up in volume as more acreage comes into production. One grower out of Baja has also started up so we should see numbers increase over the next week or so. Overall quality has been strong with no issues.

Yellow and Zucchini Squashes: Florida’s current squash producers in Homestead, Immokalee and the East Coast have a decent amount of zucchini available but are coming up very short on yellow squash due to less acreage, quality problems, etc. The supply situation is likely to remain similar for the next 2-3 weeks or until Plant City and new fields in South Florida come in. Mexico’s squash supplies will continue to play out in the southern growing districts over the next 7-14 days. However, we are starting to see a few fields get underway from new acreage in Hermosillo with more growers to come. Once they are fully up and running, this area should carry us through the month of April. In the meantime, good-quality yellow squash is likely to remain snug.

Green Beans: There’s still plenty of beans available in Florida, even with some growers finishing up Spring crops last week. We’re seeing a few quality issues here and there, as inventories get backed up. Mexico farms continue with light but steady supply this week. As with the Eastern product, quality is mostly good but there are some occasional issues from older fruit.

Hard Squash: There’s not a lot of change on the hard squash front in the East. There are a few Florida acorns, but the rest are coming out of Honduras and/or Mexico. Quality is mostly good on acorn and butternut, but there are scattering challenges with some of the Honduran spaghetti. Mexico’s supplies are improving as new fields out of Sinaloa get started.

Eggplant: Although there are a few with new crops in Florida, harvests have been minimal thus far due to a light fruit set. There should be a little more product around next week, but there may not be a major change in availability for several weeks. Mexico’s supply is on the lighter side, but is steady and is mostly meeting the increased demand of the Lent season. Production will remain in Mainland Mexico until the California desert starts in late April. Quality is variable, depending on the grower and specific area.

Chili Peppers: There are a few more chilies in Florida this week as some have started new crops in South Florida. Look for volumes to remain light until mid-April when Plant City typically gets started. Mexico continues to provide good volume on all chili varieties this week. However, Sinaloa will hit the seasonal decline soon and we could see some varieties gap as we transition to the Spring crops in Baja.

HH English Cucumbers: Production out of Canada is strong and quality is very good from both Eastern and Western Canada. In Nogales, overall volume has dropped significantly this week as one major grower and a couple of smaller growers have ended for the season.

Market update continues on page 2
Grocery department managers plotting category mix and seasonal promotions should keep in mind one often-overlooked truth: Consumers don't care about departments. So said Sally Lyons Wyatt, EVP and practice leader for industry analyst IRI, in a presentation from IRI and FMI—The Food Industry Association on leading fresh-food trends. After a year of preparing and eating most of their meals at home—and, for many shoppers, buying more of their groceries online—consumers are hungry for thoughtful meal-planning ideas and help from retailers in getting the meals they want to make on the table. "It's not about the category; it's not about the department," Lyons Wyatt said. "It is all about the meal."

U.S. consumers are making and eating 8 out of 10 meals at home right now, roughly double the share that they were pre-pandemic, according to IRI. And while many consumers are looking forward to enjoying more restaurant-prepared meals as COVID-19's grip on the country eases, the pandemic-spurred increase in cooking at home isn't expected to completely reverse.

In a new report on post-pandemic dining expectations, Deloitte noted that 42% of consumers said they expect to cook more after the pandemic than they had before, while only 7% plan to cook less. About 3 in 10 (29%) plan to buy more fresh food. And even with expanded dining-out options as restaurant restrictions are lifted, more consumers get vaccinated and some workers return to actual offices, one-third of consumers, according to Deloitte, expect to dine out less than they did previously.

Turning those dining-at-home expectations into increased sales for fresh and prepared foods will depend in part on how easy retailers make it for consumers to find and buy the items they need for the meals they want to prepare, Lyons Wyatt and Jonna Parker, principal of IRI's Fresh Center of Excellence, suggested in the "Top Trends in Fresh" webinar. It's not just offering ready-in-40-minutes recipes in-stores or online, it's grouping all ingredients, as well as suggested sides, in a single display in-store. Online, it can mean letting shoppers click on listed ingredients to add them directly to their cart—and, as applicable especially with private-label products, offering suggested substitutions based on dietary needs and flavor preferences.

"How can you use fresh as an experience in your store?" Parker said. "How can we connect the aisles together?" The idea of the "cart-stopping experience" will be even more important for retailers post-pandemic, she said, with shorter, more-focused, get-in-and-get-out shopping trips having become the default for many shoppers in the COVID era. Meal-building anchors go into baskets, she said, and becoming a dependable, go-to source not just for easy, affordable main-dish options but also all of the other components needed to complete the meal can be a post-pandemic differentiator.

Within the realm of e-commerce, Lyons Wyatt said, many grocery retailers are working to shore up their digital infrastructure to be able to better meet consumer demands. Some online grocery platforms let shoppers specify how ripe they want their produce or how they want their fresh meat cut; some also offer suggested substitutions in the case of out-of-stocks, she noted. Others don't. For consumers looking for help with dinner tonight or a baking project tomorrow, factors such as produce ripeness can make or break plans. So can the availability of non-fresh products consumers need to be able to execute on their plans.

"You have to think holistically," said Rick Stein, VP of fresh foods for FMI. A category manager responsible for the P&L sheet for produce is necessarily going to be focused on produce, but meals don't exist in department vacuums. The better, holistic approach, said Lyons Wyatt: "Help consumers own that meal again."

**MARKET UPDATE Continued…**

**HH English Cucumbers- continued:** due to either poor market conditions or the need to replant for late Spring crops. Our Florida program continues with steady production and will see an increase in about two weeks when new a new house starts.

**Colored Bell Peppers (R,Y,O):** We are seeing better production out of Mainland Mexico especially since we have had no weather-related issues so far. Sizing has been heavy to jumbos with less production on XL and LG sizes. This trend is expected to continue through most, if not all of March. We’re also seeing Canadian growers (including Lipman/Huron) get started this month and anticipate consistent availability on all three colors by the end of March/early April.

**Tomato-on-the-Vine:** There is a plethora of TOV’s available out of Mexico this week, as growers continue with steady and strong production. Canada should also begin providing regular volumes in the next 2-3 weeks.

**TRANSPORTATION FACTS**

- The US average price for diesel fuel continues to rise with another $.07 per gallon increase this week. The current price stands at $3.14.
- This year’s pricing is $.33 higher than the same time period in 2020.
- Pricing has risen in every reporting zone with all but the Gulf Coast reporting prices over the $3.00 mark. This area does have the distinction of having the largest price increase of the week- $.09 per gallon.
- California has the highest fuel price at $3.90 per gallon, while the Gulf Coast remains the low-price leader at $2.93 per gallon.
- The WTI Crude Oil price rose just under 1% this week, moving from $63.83 to $64.44 per barrel.
- Most active shipping areas in the country report truck shortages this week. Florida, the southern district of California and potato/onion shipping areas have the most challenges with truck availability.
**FRESH-CUT PICKS FROM CHEF WIL**

An initiative I have this year is to create chef-inspired blends of fresh-cut items that we can currently produce in our facilities. These will include new combinations of existing ingredients.

I will have them produced in Dallas and will conduct a 12-14 day shelf life study on them before I make suggestions to ensure they are viable for production, sale and end use.

Whether you’re one of Lipman’s valued customers or a part of Team Lipman, I would love to be included in your culinary solutions dialogue!

-Chef Wil

**DICED POBLANO & FRESNO CHILE PEPPERS**

**SLICED GRAPE TOMATOES AND CUCUMBER COINS**

**HOLY TRINITY: DICED ONION. GREEN BELL PEPPER & CELERY**

**P+12 Day Shelf Life**

Great For:
- Raw, Sautéing or As a Base for additional ingredients
- Soups, Stocks, Salads, Casseroles, Quesadillas, Pizzas, etc.

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**PRODUCE BAROMETER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>QUALITY</th>
<th>PRICING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell Pepper</td>
<td>Mostly Good</td>
<td>E-Higher; W-Higher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cucumber</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>E-Lower; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
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<td>E-Elevated; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Beans</td>
<td>Mostly Good</td>
<td>E-Higher; W-Steady</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jalapenos</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Squash-Hard</td>
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<td>E-Steady; W-Steady</td>
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<tr>
<td>Squash-Soft</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>E-Steady; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>E-Higher; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**MARCH CALENDAR**

- **March-All Month**
  - National Nutrition Month
- **March 17th**
  - St. Patrick’s Day
- **March 18th**
  - National Sloppy Joe Day
- **March 20th**
  - National Ravioli Day
- **March 21st**
  - National Crunchy Taco Day

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**Estero, FL Weather**

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</table>

Lipman Family Farms  www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com  | PHONE 239.657.4421  | FAX 239.657.6951
In terms of health benefits, five a day is the sweet spot for fruit and vegetable consumption.

In a study published in Circulation, the journal of the American Heart Association, researchers said the lowest risk of mortality was observed for about five servings per day of fruit and vegetable intake; above that level, the study found risk did not decrease further.

The thresholds of risk reduction in mortality, the study said, were two servings daily for fruit and three servings daily for vegetables.

“These findings support current dietary recommendations to increase intakes of fruits and vegetables and that the succinct 5-a-day message is consistent with available evidence,” the study said.

Compared with people who had two servings of fruits and vegetables a day, the study found those who had five servings a day had a:

- 13% lower risk of death from all causes;
- 12% lower risk of death from heart disease and stroke;
- 10% lower risk of death from cancer; and
- 35% lower risk of death from respiratory disease, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Not many Americans eat five a day, however. Just one in 10 adults eats enough fruits and vegetables, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The researchers said in a news release that the greatest benefits were seen in those individuals who ate leafy greens, such as spinach, lettuce, and kale, as well as fruits and vegetables rich in beta carotene and vitamin C, such as citrus fruits, berries, and carrots. Researchers found that starchy vegetables and fruit juices were not linked to the same benefits.

“Our analysis in the two cohorts of U.S. men and women yielded results similar to those from 26 cohorts around the world, which supports the biological plausibility of our findings and suggests these findings can be applied to broader populations,” lead study author Dong Wang, an epidemiologist, nutritionist and a member of the medical faculty at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, said in the release.

Taylor Wallace, principal and CEO of the Think Healthy Group, said in an e-mail the data is very consistent with the Produce for Better Health Foundation’s review of scientific literature that five servings a day of produce is optimal for health.

However, he said that the study findings about starchy vegetables and juice not having the same health benefits goes “too far into the weeds” and doesn’t give enough weight to the healthy way those items can be consumed. “We have randomized controlled trials of both potato and 100% juice products that show beneficial effects within a healthy dietary pattern,” Wallace said.
Attract More Customers with These Simple Website Improvements

By: Steve Comer, www.modernrestaurantmanagement.com, March 5, 2021

A restaurant’s website is an important information tool for your customers. Since this is the case it is crucial to update your website with the most recent and relevant information for your establishment. Knowing the kind of content your patrons are looking for and what changes to make is just as important. A well-designed restaurant website will help bring guests from online into your restaurant’s front door. As a website developer, who has over 20 years of experience in the industry, here are a few ways I would suggest you update your website to attract business.

Simplify Your Website
Keeping your website simple will help get your message across easier than having a lot of motion, unnecessary photos and unimportant information. Remove all of the sliding picture panes, which often take up the most expensive real estate on the website. Instead, replace these sliding pictures with one optimized image. The image should be of what you are promoting at the moment or with your biggest money-making dishes. Having too many moving pieces can cause your website to load slower. Forty percent of mobile visitors will leave your site if it takes more than 3 seconds to load.

Have your phone number in the upper right-hand corner, accented with a color to catch the eye. Keep the overall color palate of your website on brand with your business. Adding bright and unnecessary colors can distract the person looking at your website from what you actually want them reading. Another important aspect to your website is the font size. This may seem like a minor point but too many websites use small fonts making the site difficult to read, especially on mobile. When you increase the font size, even just a little, people will stay on your page longer. Lastly, have a form somewhere on every page of your website where the guests can put in their name, email and phone number. This form can be for customers to leave questions and comments. Keep the form simple and easy to use. Typically, you will want to put the form link in the footer next to your logo and contact information.

Be Mobile
Sixty-one percent of mobile searchers are more likely to contact a local business if they have a responsive website that works on all devices. When updating the design of your website you should be thinking mobile first. All of the major search engines, have switched to a mobile first initiative in recent years. Your mobile website needs to look the best and then account for how the mobile design transfers to the desktop.

Ordering Online
The COVID-19 pandemic has more than doubled online food ordering and delivery. If ordering online is now a major part of your business, then you want this to stand out more. Making this section stand out can be done by adding a special color or font. You can also integrate ordering online into your main menu. Have an area on your menu where the customer can click to easily access the order online page. Having a couple different options for people to order online can help you keep the customer on your website and have them place an order.

Be Careful with Social Media Integration
Social media is an easy way to attract customers to your website but once they are on your page you don’t want them to leave or be distracted. When integrating your website with your social media accounts you want to bury your links on the page in order to keep people on your site. Once someone leaves the site to look at your social media it is easy for them to get distracted with notifications, messages and other content on their own social media accounts. Try to limit social media icons, especially on the homepage and guests will be more likely to stay on your website.

Navigating Your Website
For a restaurant website you should have certain links listed along the top navigation bar. These include, home, menu, events, contact us and order online. Be sure to make your navigation easy to use. You want your customers to get back to the homepage as easily as possible and not have to click back through multiple pages in order to reach it. Making your responsive website easy to use will keep your customers on your pages longer and inform them of your opportunities you would like to promote. By keeping your site simple, customers will not be distracted and lose focus. Following these simple steps in designing your restaurant’s website will help you attract more customers.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS
April 6-8, 2021
SEPC’s Southern Exposure
Swan & Dolphin Resort
Lake Buena Vista, FL
www.seproducecouncil.com/events
Lipman will be at booth 823!

September 15-16, 2021 (new date)
Organic Produce Summit
Hyatt Regency Monterey
Monterey, CA
www.organicproducesummit.com

Learn more about us @
www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com
www.suntasticfresh.com

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