

AUGUST 12, 2022

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# ON THE H O R I Z O N

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MARKET**  
INDUSTRY INFO







# MARKET UPDATES

## ROUND TOMATOES

Lipman's VA tomato production is now in between Summer and Fall plantings and we expect significantly lighter volumes over the next 2-3 weeks. Depending on the weather, we'll be back into full production either the last week of August or first week of September. In the meantime, the East will be looking to TN/NC mountains, AL, NJ, and various smaller regional programs for fruit. Despite frequent rains, TN/NC farms have been pretty consistent with production. As with romas, quality is showing the effects of rain and resulting in lighter packouts than desired, but supply is adequate. Over on the West Coast, Northern CA growers should keep rolling along as tempered weather should support current levels of production for the next few weeks. Lipman's yields and quality have been really nice. Other growers are experiencing much of the same although we have heard of shape issues from some. As for Mexico, we should see some increases in Eastern production areas (Jalisco and San Luis Potosi) as farms get further into their new acreage in the coming weeks. Baja will continue with light to moderate numbers as planned for mid-summer production from San Quentin.

## ROMA TOMATOES

Eastern roma production is fairly steady despite consistent and persistent rain and showers in much of the primary production area, the TN/NC mountains. This isn't helpful to quality and has reduced packouts accordingly. However, there's enough fruit to go around as growers are in the thick of the season. Western supply is steady this week, with CA and Mexico sharing the spotlight. Northern CA growers are in the midst of a solid stream of production which should continue for the next two weeks. Overall, fruit quality is good, but there are some cosmetic issues (ex: gold flecking) as the product colors up. Looking south to Mexico, Baja is into limited mid-summer supply from San Quentin and Vizcaino while Ensenada growers wind down their early crops. East Mexico's increasing volume should help make up for Baja's decline as growers in Jalisco, San Luis Potosi/Rio Colorado, Michoacán and Nayarit move further into new acreage. Quality reports are positive with some of the nicer fruit coming from Baja. WA state is now underway as well and should be able to help satisfy local demand.

## GRAPE TOMATOES

Lipman's VA farms are still rolling with steady supplies of grape tomatoes for the East. We've just added some new blocks to the mix, so this fruit is slightly larger than optimal, but overall quality is excellent. With several other domestic growing areas in production, including TN, NC, NJ, and NY, and Canada coming along with both field and hothouse product, the future of grape tomato supply looks bright. In the West there is product available from Baja, Central Mexico, CA and WA. Baja growers are seeing a few issues on older field fruit but quality is good from most. Our Baja farm is off to a very slow start on the second block with minimal production. We should see things pick up as the full moon helps to spur things along.

## BELL PEPPERS

Although some areas are experiencing lighter picks this week, there is enough geographic diversity in production to have an adequate supply of bell peppers in the East. NJ farms have been seeing lighter than usual numbers due to heat, but they should be back on track next week as new plantings get started. NY farms have now hit their stride and have good quality and volumes available and Canadian field growers are now in the mix as well. Quality is good from most areas, but MI seems to be having issues related to the rain they've been experiencing. In the West, the Gilroy/ Hollister district continues with good production and quality and Arroyo Grande will begin their season next week. Overall production in CA will be light and steady for the balance of August. The Northwest has rebounded from the heat wave 2 weeks ago and will also have good production to handle local demand.

## CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers continue to be available in several areas in the East, including NY, MI, NJ, PA, OH, VA and NC. NY is where the volume is at this week and quality has been very nice. MI continues to have decent numbers, but quality is spotty as recent rains have made an impact.

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## CUCUMBERS...Continued

NJ's production has been on the lighter side this week, but should move back into a sweet spot as farmers begin harvesting new fields next week. Looking to the West, Baja growers are into very good volumes and have excellent quality thanks to the nice weather. WA state is now knee-deep into the season, but this is ground-grown product which typically has some yellow bellies and occasional shape concerns, which doesn't work for some customers.

## EGGPLANT

The East has an overabundance of eggplant available this week. Product is coming out of NY, OH, PA, MI, NJ, VA, NC, among others. Most areas have solid quality but there are some hit or miss issues from farms that have received weather. Western production is mostly steady at light to moderate levels out of the Fresno/Bakersfield area. Heat has caused sizing to be skewed more heavily to 18 ct than 24 ct and quality is average on this cannonball-shaped fruit. Trouble issues have included discoloration, pitting and liver spots.

Fortunately, we're covering NW business with local WA product. Production was light last week as there was almost a gap between sets, but things look good going forward.

## YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Eastern squash is still available in many areas. Rain has affected quality for some, but with so many alternatives for product, we can cover our customer's volume and quality needs. Looking to the West, previous heat issues in the NW have lightened up supplies and are bringing a quick demise to the season which will mostly finish up over the weekend.. There are a few growers on the west side of WA that will continue to harvest though. Several Baja shippers have also finished for the time being and won't be back in until mid-September for the Fall season. This will leave CA to carry the load. There are limited supplies in Watsonville/Salinas while Santa Maria will plug along with moderate supplies for the next 10-14 days. In two weeks, Santa Maria expects a slight increase in supply as new fields come into the picture.

## CHILI PEPPERS

Chili pepper availability is holding at light, consistent levels in the East and there are a variety of program sizes and types out there. MI doesn't really have a lot of volume to date, but could come along with more product in the next few weeks. NJ and NC have more product available than most areas, but all growers don't necessarily offer all of the mainstream SKUs, creating some challenges for full line sourcing there.

Cubanelles seem to be one of the most challenging, especially anywhere toward the south. In the West, Baja has been in a lighter mid-summer mode for the past few weeks. We anticipate new fields to start next week, which should hopefully give quality a boost. Central Mexico growers have been covering the demand and they've been experiencing some rain-related quality issues such as pitting on jalapenos, shriveling on poblanos and husk concerns on tomatillos. As for our local program in WA, we have plenty of jalapenos, serranos and tomatillos. Poblanos are finally coming in and we should see better numbers next week. Anaheim plants were damaged in the Spring due to cold weather, but the remaining plants look good and should have light to moderate volumes soon.

## GREEN BEANS

Green bean availability is holding steady in the East. One of the largest growers is harvesting in PA and has had some slight yield issues due to dry conditions but quality remains good. Other growing areas ( IN, TN, OH, KY , MI and NY) continue to harvest with good quality as long as they haven't had significant rain. As for the West, most all shipping districts of CA are going with moderate production and we anticipate this to continue for the next several weeks. as long as heat issues don't create quality problems. We also have local product in WA state where our program is just starting a new field. With 5 more plantings to go, we should be able to cover local business through September.

## COLORED BELL PEPPERS

Canada's colored bell pepper production is up this week, but the crops have sized down a notch. The majority of the fruit is still in the retail-friendly XL range, but there is more bushel-pack sizing available now. Quality is nice overall, but we have seen some blossom end rot on a few lots. Down south, Central Mexico's producers continue in a lighter mode. There's overall less planted this time of year, and some have been dealing with water issues, which could serve to keep supply light for the short term. We expect to see things pick back up in a few weeks when those who sit out the Summer come back into play. There are a couple of growers that have already started new crops and they have jumbos available, while the remaining houses have mostly XL and L product available. Quality is mostly good with only the occasional issue.

## MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Baja is now going strong with mini sweets and should continue at a good pace through the Summer. There's less orange and yellow fruit coming off, but plenty of reds and quality is good.

Both Canada and WA state have new crops scheduled to start next week. As supply options diversify, availability should remain strong.

## ENGLISH CUCUMBERS

HH cucumbers are plentiful in Canada as growers who were between crops have now come back into production. All sizing options are available and quality is very nice. There's also consistent volume coming out of Central Mexico with no major product or availability issues at this time. As for our FL program, production is back in a steady mode after a 5-7 day period of lighter numbers.

## ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Organic grape tomatoes are in a good space this week. Baja and Central Mexico are both in a steady production mode and quality has been very nice this week. Smaller domestic programs in SC, VA, CA, etc. also have fruit available.

## ORGANIC SQUASH

Organic squash availability is fairly steady in the West, but there is less product available than last year. Both Baja and CA local growers have reduced acreage this time around, especially those in CA. The Pacific NW has started up and should be able to help take care of demand.



## NEWS IN THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY

# Study: Low-income households buy private labels the least

[THE PACKER.COM](https://www.thepacker.com)

August 1, 2022

By: Amy Sowder

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A new private-label study revealed findings on retailers and consumers that can inform fresh produce branding decisions, but despite perception, low-income households buy private labels the least. Smaller format grocery retailers lead in private label share.

Market research company Numerator released the most recent results of this ongoing private-label study with more than 10,000 responses monthly, comparing April 1 through June 30 to the same time frame one and two years ago.

This study examines private label trends across channels, retailers, consumer groups and product types. As inflation continues to rise, more consumers indicate a willingness to trade down from branded products to private label.

"The days of treating private label products as untrackable are over," Numerator CEO Eric Belcher said in the news release.

### Private label retailer findings:

- Amazon captures significantly lower private label share in grocery. While Amazon captures higher private label share among its consumer electronics and home goods products, the retailer posts a private label share of 3% among Grocery, Household, and Health & Beauty products.
- Aldi, Target, and Amazon lead in fastest growing private label brands. Aldi private label household penetration grew by 2.3 points from the second quarter of 2021 to the second quarter of 2022, followed by Favorite Day/Target at +2.2 points, Amazon Basics with +1.7, Member's Mark/Sam's Club at +1.3 and Kwik Trip at +1.3.

### Omnichannel private label findings:

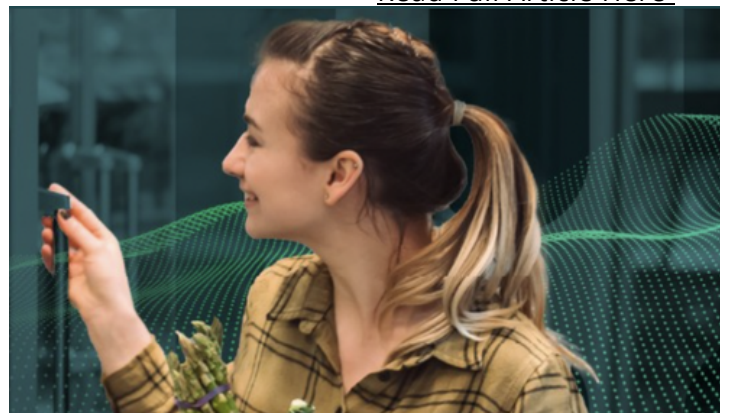
- Within the grocery sector, private label brands account for 17.4% of sales, while branded products account for 82.6%.

- Private label grocery share in the club channel at 32.1% is about twice that of other channels. Club is followed by Mass (22.6% private label share), Online (20.2%), Food (18.6%), Dollar (9.9%) and Drug (4.7%).
- Private label grocery share is lowest among low-income households. Despite a perception of private label as a brand for cash-strapped households, private label grocery items hold similar share among low income (17.1%), middle income (17.9%), and high income (17.2%) consumers.

### Private label consumer sentiment findings:

- High-income consumers have the most favorable opinions of private label products. More than half of high-income shoppers (56.9%) rate private label products' value as excellent or above average, compared to 55.2% of middle income and 52.5% of low income shoppers who said the same.
- As inflation continues to rise, price is becoming more important than brand name for many consumers. In recent months, the number of consumers who say price is more important than brand name has grown across all income levels.
- More middle- and high-income consumers are buying private label to save money. Nearly two in five high-income (39.5%) and middle-income (38.8%) consumers are purchasing private label as a cost-saving measure.

[Read Full Article Here](#)





# NEWS IN THE GROCERY WORLD

## Retailers launch new packaging initiatives in the produce aisle

[THEPACKER.COM](http://THEPACKER.COM)

By **AMANDA BALTAZAR** August 1, 2022

Single-use, plastic packaging is increasingly under fire. Some consumers are realizing that plastic, which will exist for centuries after it's used, may not be the ideal material to wrap food that will be consumed in minutes.

Retailers are taking notice, introducing packaging options and doing what they can to educate shoppers about their choices, especially when it comes to produce and how they can make a difference.

As part of sustainability initiatives, many retailers are making promises. These include pledges from companies to have a certain percentage of their private label packaging be recyclable, reusable or compostable by a year – often 2025. The challenge with goals like these is that many so-called recyclable packages are not, in fact, recycled.

It's not all doom and gloom though. Jimbo's takes reducing single-use plastic to heart. In 2019, the four-unit, San Diego-based retailer announced a plastic-free water aisle and works to reduce packaging in every department, including produce.

Sustainability Coordinator Stephanie Morris focuses on what consumers can do with packaging after they've used it. While there's no perfect choice for a package that's used to temporarily hold something that's eaten then discarded, she tries to educate consumers that eschewing plastic is a big mindset shift "because of the convenience we're used to." She talks to customers about it becoming a mindfulness activity.

In the produce department, Jimbo's has considered compostable packaging versus plastic/recyclable products. But it's almost a wash, Morris says, as compostables often end up in the landfill since few consumers compost at home, and plastic is often not recycled.

Jimbo's also features compostable bags in its bulk section and non-GMO Project Verified, plant-based bags for produce. But Morris has had to educate shoppers that there's a downside to these bags: You can't use them in the same way as a plastic bag. "You can't wrap lettuce in a plant-based bag because it wilts," she said. There's signage in the stores and social media videos about the bags, which the retailer introduced in September 2019.

The stores do all they can to educate consumers, but, said Morris, "it's a fine line between bursting everyone's bubble and expanding that bubble."

The small chain uses social media — mostly Instagram and Facebook — and email blasts, especially if stores change any packaging. Jimbo's also furnishes all employees with any packaging change information, "so when we get questions, in-store staff have the confidence to give information, rather than just saying it came from corporate," Morris says. "The conversations we have are important."

Social media is a great tool because it boosts engagement, Morris points out. "We invite people to share their ideas and that engagement has been huge for us. It also gives our social media coordinator a chance to respond and try to educate one on one sometimes." And sometimes, customers spur change, Morris adds. "Sometimes, [they] are the catalyst of why we think about changing something from plastic."

[CONTINUE READING](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**October 27-29, 2022**

**IFPA Global Produce & Floral Show**

Orlando, FL

[www.freshproduce.com/events](http://www.freshproduce.com/events)

Lipman will be at booth 3462!

**December 1, 2022**

**The New York Produce Show**

New York, NY

[www.nyproduceshow.com](http://www.nyproduceshow.com)

## PRODUCE BAROMETER:

ITEM	QUALITY	PRICING
Bell Pepper	Good	Lower
Cucumber	Good	Steady
Eggplant	Varied	Steady
Green Beans	Good	Steady
Chili's	Varied	Steady
Squash-Hard	Good	Steady
Squash-Soft	Good	Steady
Tomatoes	Good	Steady

## Check out our recipe in The Snack's WTF

A spicy Thai green bean salad, featuring Lipman Family Farms® Green Beans and many more fresh ingredients, perfect for any event!



**WTF DO I DO WITH  
LIPMAN FAMILY FARMS® GREEN BEANS  
?!**