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**CROP &  
MARKET**  
INDUSTRY INFO





# MARKET UPDATES

## ROUND TOMATOES

Eastern round tomato supply is very limited this week. Quincy growers are running 3rd picks to extend the season as long as possible, but they will be done for all practical purposes in the next week. Minimal post-storm salvage harvests are taking place in the Ruskin/Palmetto area but most of this fruit is going into the #2 pile due to scarring and other defects. Quality is a little better on the smaller fruit but is generally not retail appropriate. Supply is expected to remain limited until January, when south FL moves into crops that were replanted after the hurricane. With CA and WA both out of the picture, Mexico is the sole source of round tomatoes in the West. Eastern Mexico's volume is flat, bringing limited volumes to market. Baja usually has solid volumes this time of year, but new fields are not bringing the harvests previously expected due to post-Kay effects. Another grower is starting in the next week, but volume expectations are low for the same reason. The current short supply situation is likely to persist until late December/early January when Culiacan's production kicks in.

## ROMA TOMATOES

To put it simply- there are no retail-grade romas in the East. North FL/South GA's minimal plantings are pretty much wrapped up and all that remains are the salvage harvests in the Ruskin/Palmetto area. Since these crops were heavily damaged by Ian, yields are minimal and quality is rough with scarring as the predominant factor. Supply is expected to remain extremely limited until January, when South FL moves into the crops that were replanted after the hurricane. Western supply is now completely in the hands of Mexico as CA and WA programs have finished for the season. The two main areas of supply are Baja, where production has been affected by previous weather, and East Mexico (Jalisco, San Luis Potosi, etc). Although East Mexico is in the thick of Fall supply, the numbers are relatively light compared to what we see out of Sinaloa in the Winter season. With strong bi-coastal demand, this product will likely remain snug until the new season begins in Culiacan.

## GRAPE TOMATOES

Ruskin/Palmetto growers are harvesting what they can after storm damages, but yields are about 1/3 of normal and packouts are down by about 75%. Between the yields and quality, there's not much product suitable for retail. This is likely to persist until mid-late December when South FL returns to production. In the West, we're down to Baja and Central Mexico for supply. Baja's plants were weakened significantly by Kay. That and cooler temperatures are keeping supply from making much of a comeback. Central Mexico's supply is also lighter due to cooler weather and storm. With both the East and West in light supply, the situation looks to be snug for at least the next month.

## COLORLED BELL PEPPERS

Canada's colored pepper production continues its seasonal decline, with most growers having topped the plants to finish out the season in mid-November. Sizing has come down with mostly large and more limited amounts of small XL fruit available. Quality remains strong though. Moving to the south, Central Mexico houses are working through transition between Summer and Winter crops and supply has been on the lighter side, with reds especially short. New crops have been slow to come on but should gradually begin to do so over the next few weeks. There is also a little fruit coming out of West MX and TX but volume won't be significant until the Culiacan area gets in gear after the first of the year.

## GREEN BELL PEPPERS

GA has been the East's primary source of pepper supply for the past few weeks, but change is coming. GA still has pretty good volumes, but there are now some issues with bruising and decay that make their product less attractive. Fortunately, we are beginning to see FL growers get into the game. Some FL crops have been affected by Ian, but others were relatively unhurt. So, we're likely to see a little less product at the beginning of the season and possibly some hit or miss quality

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concerns, depending on the area/farm. On a positive note, some East Coast bells should get started next week and a few more farms in the Immokalee area will get rolling in the next 7-10 days, so things are looking up! In the West, the CA desert has moved past the early stages of the season and has steady supply and good quality. However, they are still battling size with the crop producing mostly large and choice pepper due to previous weather. XL fruit will be snug, but the desert should help bridge the gap between domestic and MX production through the month of November.

Nogales is seeing pepper cross sporadically from Sonora a couple of times a week. Consistency should improve over the next 2 weeks but volume will remain relatively light. Our ranch won't start out of Sinaloa until mid- December.

## CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers have been very short in the East for the past few weeks and remain snug at this time. However, there are a few more around this week as a couple of FL growers, including Lipman, begin harvesting crops that either made it through the storm or grew out of damages. What we're seeing at this point are very light yields and light volumes, but quality is actually quite nice. Volume should slowly gain some steam over the next few weeks, although seasonal production levels are expected to be down. Looking to the West, there's still product crossing through Otay from Baja and a few of those growers will continue to have product through November. Mainland Mexico (Sonora and Sinaloa) will be ramping up in production as new shade houses get started over the next week or two. Quality and condition have been good from the new Mainland crops but there are still a few issues (mostly scarring) on the Baja product. Demand is still strong from the East, but we expect that to ease up as more cucumbers become available in FL.

## YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Squash is available from GA to south FL and there's adequate supply to meet demand. GA is moving into the last phases of the season, while FL has several areas in production this week. FL's overall yields are down a little, but quality is strong. Any quality concerns are generally from older product. In the West, Mainland Mexico continues to bring consistent supplies into Nogales, but cool weather in the Hermosillo growing region has slowed down production on both yellows and zucchinis. The weather forecast is for cooler and cloudy weather for the next week and growers will be transitioning between fields, so supplies may be lighter for the short term. By mid-late November, supply should be back to more normal levels.

## EGGPLANT

South FL farms have started eggplant in a light way, providing relief from the less-than-stellar quality fruit from GA. Yields are light, but volumes are adequate to meet demand. As the Selma/Fresno area in the CA valley winds down over the next week, the CA Desert is poised to provide domestic product for the next few weeks. There are only a couple of growers participating in Fall crops this year, but they should have at least light supplies for those who can use the cannonball-shaped product they grow. The Mainland Mexico/Culiacan program has started. More growers are expected to add to the mix over the next week, so we'll see supply continue to increase. Quality has been very nice on the early fruit.

## GREEN BEANS

There are a few beans left in GA and limited volumes in north FL, but the overall supply situation remains short this week. We may see a few late beans on the Eastern shore of VA this weekend and next week but there's not a lot of product on the horizon until South FL gets started the week of Nov 14th. As is typical, early harvests will be light but volume should build and be at seasonal levels at/after the Thanksgiving holiday. Western bean production is also very light this week. Baja and Fresno are winding down for the season as cold weather pushes them to the finish line. Other areas in CA continue to provide product sporadically but quality isn't the greatest and won't work for most customers. There are a few more growers in the northern area of Mexico that have started up with supplies. Our main growing area of Guasave (Sinaloa) is projecting a November 15th startup date with very limited volumes at first. We expect holiday demand to trump the increase in supplies.

## CHILI PEPPERS

GA continues to provide the bulk of supply in the East, although we are now starting to see a few varieties pop up in South FL. Plant City is late to the season, as their crops were pushed off by weather. But, we should see some fruit from the area in the next two weeks. In the West, there continues to be chilies from both CA local deals and Baja. Mainland Mexico is slowly starting up and all varieties are now available in Nogales. The largest chili grower of the region will be starting up next week so we should see a considerable increase in volume. There are no major quality issues at the moment.

## MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Mini sweet peppers continue to be very short. Hurricane Kay took out the vast majority of Baja's production, leaving very minimal production. Central MX has light supply with hit or miss availability by day. With such strong demand, growers are pushing harvests, so there are some concerns with size and color. Once the majority of new crops get started in Mainland Mexico in December/January, supply and pricing should level out.

## HARD SQUASH

A number of hard squash growers in both the north and south have finished up the season early, leaving a little less product around for the holiday demand. There are light volumes coming out of MI, GA, CAN, and NY with a variety of quality.

Fortunately, there are a couple of growers with significant volume that are just starting to ship from the NE to help out with the traditionally strong demand in that area. In the West, domestic programs in CA and WA are winding down the season but will have storage acorn, butternut, and spaghetti into November. The Mexico season is getting started slowly. Butternut was the first to start in Sonora and is now ramping up in Nogales. Spaghetti will start in a light way this weekend and acorn will be the last variety to get going shortly thereafter.



## NEWS IN THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY

# Products are shrinking, but prices are not

By Jeniece Drake

Oct. 25, 2022

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

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Consumers are paying the maximum for the minimum more and more these days as many companies are reducing the weight or quantity of products, but keeping prices the same.

This practice has been dubbed “shrinkflation,” but not even half of consumers are aware of it, according to a new report from Kroger-owned retail data science, insights and media company 84.51°.

Of shoppers surveyed for the firm's October consumer digest, 29% of shoppers said they have not noticed any categories that are shrinking pack sizes.

Of the 45% of shoppers who have noticed shrinkflation, they said they will buy a different brand that hasn't reduced its size. Still, 40% of consumers said they will still purchase the item at the reduced size, and 42% said they will purchase it as well, but only if they have a coupon.

But 17% of consumers said they wouldn't buy the downsized item at all, while a smaller percentage, 10%, said they would actually buy more packages to ensure they have enough of the product.

Perhaps shrinkflation isn't as noticeable among consumers because of some of the subtleties of it—that unfilled handle on some orange juice jugs, or that new packaging shape that allows for less of the item inside it.

One shopper talked to Boston 25 News about the container of her favorite brand of hummus. “It looked the same on the top but when you felt the bottom, it had a little divot. It looked like the same packaging but they had shrunk it,” she said.

Other examples of shrinkflation may be harder to notice, requiring consumers to read the fine print to decipher how much they're buying.

“We have to look at the products we buy all the time. How many sheets on your rolls of toilet paper or paper towels? How many ounces in your orange juice? How big is the family size of cereal?” Edgar Dworsky, founder of consumer resource guide Consumer World, told Boston 25 News. “That's the only way you'll be able to tell if the manufacturer is tinkering with it when you go back to buy the next box or bag.” Shrinkflation is another, perhaps less obvious, symptom of higher food prices.

“It is a real form of inflation,” Bailey Norwood, head of Oklahoma State's Department of Agricultural Economics, stated on ozarksfirst.com. “The price is going up, but the price tag you see in the grocery isn't going up, the quantity is going down. I understand how people wouldn't like it because it does seem kind of sneaky.”

Smaller sizes are more apparent to shoppers in some types of products compared to others, the report found.

The most common categories in which shrinking sizes are being noticed, according to the 84.51° report, are: chips (by 50% of consumers); cereal (by 33% of consumers); bacon (by 28% of consumers); ice cream (by 26% of consumers); candy bars (by 23% of consumers); and toilet paper (by 23% of consumers). “The companies have to do something. They realize they can't supply the normal amount at the normal price,” Norwood said. “Something's got to give.” Dworsky mentioned four ways that consumers can protect themselves from shrinkflation: focus on size; compare brands; use unit pricing; and complain to the company.

“Are Charmin or Cottonelle going to change because you wrote a letter? No, but they'll send you some coupons,” Dworsky said.



# NEWS IN THE GROCERY WORLD

## Redefining 'healthy' on the agenda at White House's 1st hunger, nutrition and health update meeting

Jeniece Drake

Oct. 27, 2022

[WINSIGHTGROCERYBUSINESS.COM](https://www.winsightgrocerybusiness.com)

Updating the definition of the word "healthy" on food packaging was among the topics discussed Wednesday during the first monthly update meeting following last month's historic White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health.

Grocery retail leaders, government officials, academics, and activists from across the country came together for the livestreamed conference. The gathering was the first event like it in more than 50 years.

The conference kicked off work toward the Biden-Harris administration's goal to end hunger, reduce diet-related diseases in the U.S. by 2030, and close the gap for families struggling to afford food. An \$8 billion public-private commitment was announced to help achieve the goal.

Dr. Susan Mayne, the director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Perrie Briskin, policy advisor at Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) spoke at Wednesday's update meeting. Much was discussed, including the national strategy on hunger, nutrition and health pillars which are: improve food access and affordability; integrate nutrition and health; empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices; support physical activity for all; and enhance nutrition and food security research. But one of the highlights was a discussion of the proposed rule to update the definition of "healthy."

"The national strategy includes updating the definition of the 'healthy' nutrient content claim that consumers can see on the front of food packages. The definition is being updated to align with current nutrition science and the dietary guidelines for Americans," Mayne said earlier this month at the 45th National Food Policy Conference.

On Wednesday, she reported that 75% of people have dietary patterns low in vegetables, fruits and dairy, 63% exceed the limit for added sugars, 77% exceed the limit for saturated fat, and 90% exceed the chronic disease risk reduction limits for sodium.

Mayne said current "healthy" criteria are no longer consistent with nutrition science and federal dietary guidance, including the dietary guidelines for Americans, nor the updated nutrition facts label.

"Current dietary guidelines focus on the importance of healthy dietary patterns and the food groups that comprise them, the type of fat in the diet rather than the total amount of fat consumed and the amount of sodium and added sugars in the diet. The proposed definition is consistent with this focus," Mayne said earlier this month.

Mayne said the government is working to develop a "healthy" symbol to go along with the new definition to help consumers in their shopping. "We know that most people's eating patterns do not align with current dietary recommendations so we believe updating the 'healthy' claim and having a symbol could help improve eating patterns," she said. The post-conference update meetings will take place monthly in efforts to "maintain momentum from the conference," said Laura Carroll, policy advisor for rural, agriculture and nutrition.



WHITE HOUSE  
CONFERENCE ON  
**HUNGER,  
NUTRITION,  
& HEALTH**

Logo courtesy: The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**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	Steady
Cucumber	Good	Steady
Eggplant	Varied	Lower
Green Beans	Good	Elevated
Chili's	Varied	Steady
Squash-Hard	Good	Steady
Squash-Soft	Good	Mostly Steady
Tomatoes	Good	Elevated

## ELYSE LIPMAN NAMED NEW CEO OF LIPMAN FAMILY FARMS

Fourth generation Lipman family member, Elyse Lipman, will succeed Kent Shoemaker after 13 years leading the company, Lipman Family Farms announced. "Elyse provides a deep understanding of the business and industry and has helped shape our culture and core values. She continues to push our business to greater heights and the board knows that she will be an inspiring and effective leader as we look forward to this next chapter," said Kent Shoemaker. "She is one of the smartest strategic leaders I have known and know that she will do an outstanding job leading Lipman Family Farms into the next season of success."

