

NOVEMBER 25, 2023

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# ON THE H O R I Z O N

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updates

# CROP & MARKET

INDUSTRY INFO







# MARKET UPDATES

## ROMA TOMATOES

FL's roma tomato volume is light to moderate, with most of the fruit still coming from the R/P area. Lipman and other growers will stay in R/P a little longer on romas than with rounds before transitioning further south. MX is still in the awkward in-between season with fruit coming from Baja and Eastern MX while we wait for Sinaloa areas to get started. There has been a little skin check on the fruit during the past week, but that should clean up as growers move past the rain-affected tomatoes. We'll be looking to see romas out of Culiacan area in another 2-3 weeks, with volume building to seasonal levels after the new year.

## ROUND TOMATOES

Growers in R/P are still harvesting mostly 2nd's, but will continue for a couple more weeks. Lipman got started in Labelle where quality looks good and sizing should be a notch bigger than the R/P crops. MX round tomato volumes will continue at light levels for the next 2-3 weeks while we wait for the Culiacan area to get started. Baja and East MX are winding down but should have fruit for a few more weeks. Although some growers may be delayed due to prior weather, we expect to see fruit from Los Mochis, La Cruz and Culiacan by mid to late December.

## GRAPE TOMATOES

Grape tomatoes have been very short in the East for the past week. Recent rains kept harvesters out of the fields for 4-5 days and when they were able to harvest, the packouts were light due to rain-related splits and quality concerns. We should see more consistent volume in the coming week as we resume normal harvesting in Labelle and Naples. As for MX, it's still very tight. There are a few grapes in Baja and a few in Central MX, but no big volumes anywhere. A few will start in Sinaloa in the next week, but it will likely be 3-4 weeks before supply is back to adequate levels.

## TOV

CAN and domestic crops are winding down or are in transition to the lighter Winter crops. Central MX is now the hot spot for TOV's. Quality has been good but sizing is more in the medium to smaller range as less daylight and cooler temperatures make their mark.

## COLORLED BELL PEPPERS

With the CAN season now finished (to return in March), all eyes are on MX for colored bells. Right now, Central MX's volume is light mostly due to a spell of cloudy, gloomy weather. There have been a handful of colored bells from Sinaloa, but no significant amounts. Most growers will get started in a few more weeks.

## GREEN BELL PEPPERS

FL is now fully into the pepper season with fruit available in Plant City, south FL and on the East Coast. It's mostly 2X and XL fruit right now with just a few jumbos thrown in the mix. Quality is good and definitely better than what remains in GA. In the West, peppers are in transition mode. Coachella has another 10-14 days to go, but we are starting to see a few bells cross into Nogales now. The earliest fruit was a little rough due to prior weather, but that has cleaned up and things look good going forward. Look for Mainland MX to be into seasonal volumes by mid-December.

## GREEN BEANS

Now that Thanksgiving has come and gone, there are plenty of beans around in several FL locations. Quality is good as growers have now worked through all the rain-affected plantings. MX is also starting to see stronger numbers as more farms, including ours, get started. Pending any weather issues, beans look to be in good shape for the immediate future.

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## YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

After some significant rain last week, squash supplies in FL have been snug. However, we do expect supply and quality to improve as we move through the weekend. Looking to the West, supply is snug as production transitions from Sonora to Sinaloa. Sonora's quality has been sub-par on the last of their fruit and volume has been minimal, especially on yellows. Both quality and volumes will improve as more Sinaloa farms get up and running between now and mid-December.

## CUCUMBERS

Now that GA is down to offgrades as they finish up for the season, the East is looking to FL for retail-grade cucumbers. Plant City and south FL have been providing fairly strong volumes but will start to see the numbers taper off over the next few weeks as the major Winter season starts to wind down. There will still be a few cucs in FL here and there, but the bulk of volume will move to Honduras by mid-late December. Quality has been good, although there have been some issues here and there due to recent rains. Western cucumber availability has gotten a little more consistent as we move past some of the weather issues. There is still some fruit in Baja, but the majority of volume is now coming out of Sinaloa where quality is good.

## HARD SQUASH

The East is now in storage mode for hard squash. There's still a little in MI, decent volume in NY, and a few bits and pieces in other locations. But, the active season is over until the Honduras fruit comes in sometime around the new year. In the West, Sonora and CA both have product available but most are looking to Nogales for fruit due to freight economies. MX has good volumes on spaghetti but a little less on acorn and butternut. As Eastern demand begins to shift to MX, these two squashes may tighten up until more growers come online in mid-December.

## CHILI PEPPERS

While there's definitely not an overabundance of chilies in the East, there is still some product in GA, all varieties in Plant City, and some select options in south FL. In the West, chilies have turned the page. Baja and CA are on the downhill side of the season, leaving Mainland MX in the driver's seat. Supply is still light at this point, especially on poblanos, but should gradually increase to more normal levels over the next few weeks.

## EGGPLANT

Although GA is still working and both Plant City and south FL have started lightly, eggplant is on the shorter side in the East this week. Plant City doesn't seem to have as many in the ground this year so we'll be looking for more south FL blocks to get up and running for supply. Quality is nice on the fruit that is available. As for the West, CA's crops are finishing up as Mainland MX/Culiacan gets rolling. Look for MX volume to increase gradually up until mid-December, when they should be in seasonal volumes. Quality has been very nice, but there have been some lots of shorter fruit that do not meet all retail specs.

## CALABACITA

Calabacita is also in a snug spot, but should see improvements over the next week or two.

## ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Organic grape tomatoes are almost non-existent this week. Much of Baja's supply was converted to conventional as growers had to spray to combat pest pressure. There's light supply in Central MX, but it's not enough to handle demand. Fortunately, it looks like Culiacan will get started in a light way over the next 7-10 days and gradually bring enough volume to meet demand.

## ORGANIC ROMA

There's still a small amount of supply in Baja but their volume has decreased as they near the end of the season. Central MX and Sonora have a little product to help the cause, but look for things to remain short until Culiacan gets going at the end of December.

## ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

Organic mini cucumber production is steady out of Mainland MX and quality is acceptable.

## ORGANIC MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Organic mini sweets have tightened up quickly. There's only 3 growers with fruit right now and their volumes are minimal as they near the end of the crops. One grower in Culiacan is set to start in mid-December, but others have pushed off their start date until the first week of January. Looks like December could be challenging on this item.





## LIPMAN FAMILY FARMS USES AWETA MACHINE FOR PACKING PEPPERS

[SUPERMARKETPERIMETER.COM](https://supermarketperimeter.com)

11.22.2023 By [Andy Nelson](#)

Lipman Family Farms has invested in a cutting-edge 12-lane AWETA machine for packing peppers in Florida.

The machine expands the vegetable packing capabilities at Lipman's existing facilities and significantly improves automation efficiencies. It can sort and pack approximately 5,200 cases of peppers per hour and offers various packing capabilities, including DRCs, PLU labeling, and bagging.

It's part of a series of upgrades and expansions at Lipman.

"The acquisition of Chapman Produce and the implementation of cutting-edge equipment, such as the AWETA machine, allow us to continue to streamline our operations and improve efficiency," said Toby Purse, the company's chief operating officer. "These investments allow us to continue to enhance our operations, become more efficient, and deliver the same quality to our retailers and consumers alike."



# GROCERS FEED THANKSGIVING MEAL DEALS TO CONSUMERS OVERSTUFFED WITH INFLATION

By **Russell Redman**

Nov. 13, 2023

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

U.S. consumers' ongoing inflationary mindset has supermarket chains stuffing their winter holiday promotions this season with more Thanksgiving meal deals.

The Kroger Co. on Monday unveiled its "Freshgiving" Thanksgiving meal package of 15 staple items—from turkey to sides to dessert—that feeds 10 people for less than \$5 per person, down from last year's basket of 11 items for as low as \$5 per person.

The Freshgiving offer includes eight Kroger-brand items—a whole frozen turkey (14-16 lbs.), Idaho potatoes, turkey stuffing chicken broth, super sweet corn baby carrots, crispy french fried onions and brown-and-serve rolls—plus a Kroger "Our Brands" Bakery Fresh Goodness pumpkin pie (10-inch). Rounding out the package are Ocean Spray fresh premium cranberries, sweet jewel yams (various brands), Campbell's turkey gravy, Campbell's cream of mushroom soup, Del Monte French-style green beans and Cool Whip original whipped cream topping.

Price per person includes store coupons and discounts, and pricing may vary by geography, Kroger noted. The Cincinnati-based grocer also plans multiple weekly digital deals, including the Kroger 5X event starting Wednesday that allows digital coupons to be redeemed up to five times, 4X fuel points Fridays and 4X fuel points on gift card purchases (for a limited time only).

Families looking to spend less time in the kitchen for Turkey Day can opt for heat-and-eat Thanksgiving meals and sides from Kroger's Home Chef meal-kit brand. The proteins and sides can be bundled for more savings, including a boneless turkey and five sides serving six people that starts at \$65. Customers can choose from sides such as old-fashioned bread stuffing, sweet potato souffle, turkey gravy, creamy scalloped potatoes and others.

"This year, we are bringing more to the table for less, with a holiday basket that gives thanks no matter what your traditions are. Food connects us all," Kroger Chairman and CEO Rodney McMullen said in a statement.

Jacksonville, Florida-based Winn-Dixie, meanwhile, last week announced the "Thanks-Winning" holiday meal for less than \$30.

The Thanksgiving meal deal encompasses a 15-lb. or less frozen Butterball turkey (99 cents per lb.) and a range of SE Grocers-brand sides, including stuffing (6 oz.), yams-cut sweet potatoes (29 oz.), small early peas (15-15.25 oz.), canned corn or canned cut green beans (14.2-15.2 oz.), cranberry sauce (14 oz.) and brown-and-serve rolls (11 oz.), plus an eight-inch pumpkin pie from Winn-Dixie's bakery.

Customers can find for the Thanks-Winning holiday meal display near the meat department of their local Winn-Dixie store or ask a store associate for help.

In addition, Winn-Dixie said it has introduced a "Price Hold" seasonal discount program to help rein in pricing on grocery staples. The retailer said the new initiative lowers prices on more than 1,000 commonly shopped items, and customers can save over 20% on average when purchasing items marked in blue "Price Hold" signage throughout the store. Through Jan. 7, discounted items include condiments, baking ingredients and frying essentials, gravy and stocks, vegetables, sweet treats, holiday staples and home basics.

**[READ MORE HERE](#)**





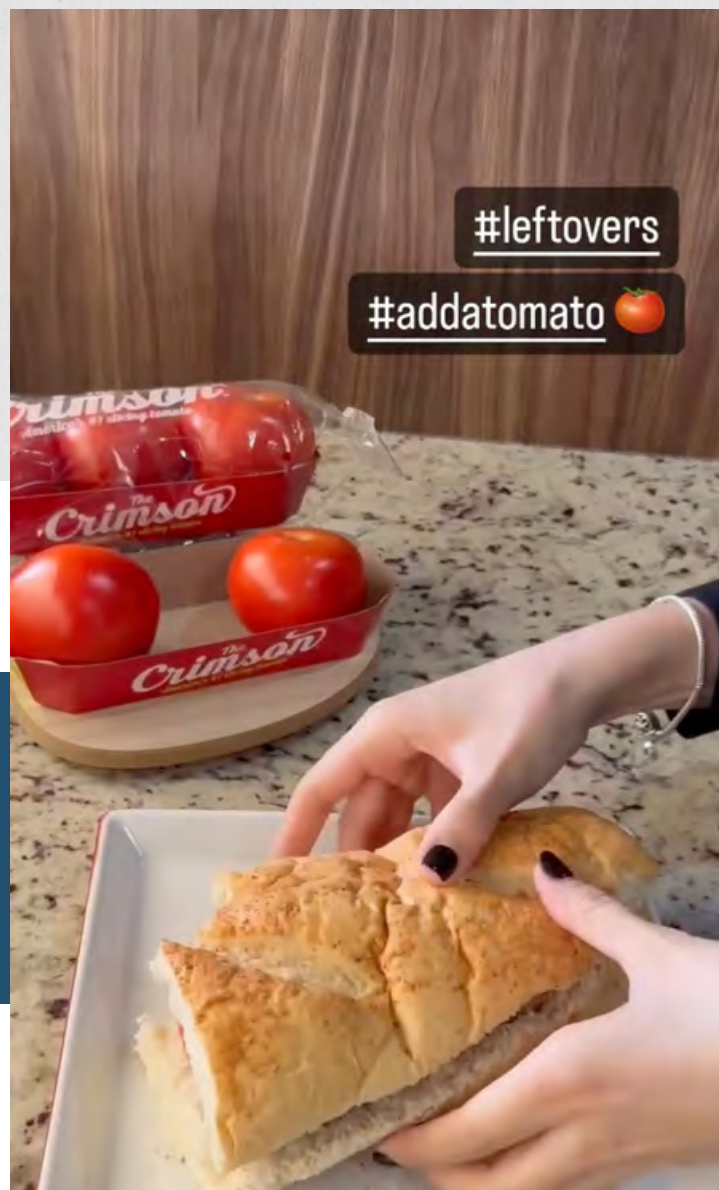
# UPCOMING EVENTS:

December 5-7, 2023

New York Produce Show

BOOTH #418

New York, NY



WHAT'S BETTER THAN  
THANKSGIVING DINNER?  
LEFTOVERS!

ADD A TOMATO TO BRIGHTEN UP  
THE DEEP, RICH FLAVORS OF YOUR  
TURKEY SANDWICH TODAY. YOU  
CAN THANK US LATER.



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