

DECEMBER 1, 2023

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updates

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INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

FL's roma tomato volume remains light to moderate, with production beginning to make the transition further south. Lipman has been harvesting fruit in Labelle with most of it on the bigger side. We'll start in Naples within the next week where sizing looks to be back to a smaller, more regular range. Last week, we had a higher than desired percentage of gradeouts due to rain, but this week's harvests have cleaned up nicely. 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. East MX is expected to harvest through mid-December with declining volume and just a few growers continuing beyond that. As for Baja, a big drop off in supply is projected for San Quentin next week, with less and less supply through December. A couple of smaller deals from Colonet and La Paz will start this week adding to the Vizcaino supply. Vizcaino will likely go until early January with volume sliding weekly. Overall supplies from Baja will be on the decline moving forward.

West Mexico is projected to start in a light way somewhere between December 13th and 20th, with better volume after the New Year.

ROUND TOMATOES

Ruskin/Palmetto will wind down the round tomato season over the next week or so with a lot of small fruit (6x6 and 6x7's), as the Immokalee region gets going in a more significant way. Lipman has already moved south to Labelle where we will go another 10 days with 2nd's. However, we are just getting started at the Naples farm and the crops look excellent. Sizing is down slightly from Labelle, but there looks to be a good mix coming in the next few weeks. Our first runs have been very smooth, as the fruit quality is very nice. In the West, East MX's volume will be decreasing weekly as we move into December. Baja is also on the decline, but is expected to run until early January as conditions allow. Quality has been just okay, as there has been some skin check thanks to recent weather. Guasave and Culiacan are on tap to start in a very light way between December 13th and 20th, with volume after the new year.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Grape tomatoes have been very short this week in both the East and West. Low temps in the 40's & 50's in south FL have significantly slowed down grape tomato production with one

grower expecting to be out for the next 10-14 days. Lipman (and others) are not able to harvest as frequently as planned due to lack of color/maturity caused by the cooler weather but there are limited amounts of fruit available with nice quality. A warmer weather pattern would help to put things back on track in the Naples and Labelle areas, which is where Lipman is currently harvesting. Unfortunately, there is very little available in MX to supplement the supply. There are a few grapes in Central MX, but no volume to speak of. Sinaloa has just started in a very light way but we don't expect volume to satisfy demand until the end of December. Quality has been just so-so out of MX, as is common when supply is so short and growers strive to fill the orders.

TOV

As projected, the post-Thanksgiving demand, or lack thereof, has forced growers to take their high-tech Central MX TOV's to minimum pricing levels. But this is short lived as we move into the coldest, darkest time of the year where supply usually becomes snug.

COLORS BELL PEPPERS

Central MX 's colored pepper volumes are limited as cold weather has caused a production slowdown, sizing issues, and some green cast. There has been a lot more large fruit in the past week than XL or jumbos. We'll begin seeing fruit from West MX over the next few weeks, but with holiday demand and light production things may be a bit snug until the new year. Central MX's numbers should also rebound to some extent.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

The Immokalee area and the East Coast of FL are pumping out the most bell pepper volumes this week but there are also a few in Plant City. Sizing options are good as there are growers in various stages of production. Quality is okay, as some of the recent fruit has had some rain-related bruising issues. Look for that to clean up as we move into next week. Many of the remaining GA farms with pepper got hit with a hard freeze over the past week, so they are done for all practical purposes.

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In the West, peppers are still in transition mode. Coachella has another 10-14 days to go, but we're seeing MX fruit out of Sonora and northern Sinaloa gain momentum. The newer fields are trending toward bigger sizing but a good range is available. Both the CA and new-crop MX fruit has very nice quality. Look for Mainland MX to be into seasonal volumes by mid-December.

GREEN BEANS

FL growers picked ahead for the holiday and cold weather held back new fields, which has lessened availability on green beans this week. There are light to moderate volumes in northern FL and Immokalee, but GA is out of the picture now and the Lake area is actually in a brief skip. Homestead has decent production levels, but there's less acreage this season due to rain during the planting cycle. Look for volumes to improve once a warmer weather pattern sets in. As for MX farms, they are coming in with good supply and quality. We may see a bit of a flush in the next 2-3 weeks.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

There's not a lot of squash in FL this week as recent rains affected harvests and quality. As usual, there are more quality challenges with yellows than zucchini. 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. Look for some improvement in another 5-7 days as more growers get started in Sinaloa.

CUCUMBERS

FL's cucumber production continues at a moderate pace. As with bell peppers, the main areas with product are Plant City, Immokalee and the East Coast. Overall, quality has been very nice. There will still be a few FL cucs here and there, but the bulk of volume will move to Honduras by mid-late December. We expect to see a little of the import product as early as next week. Western cucumber production has been steady and good this week with excellent quality and color. There is still some fruit in Baja and a little coming from Central MX, but the majority of volume is now coming out of Sinaloa.

HARD SQUASH

With GA out of the picture now, eggplant is a FL deal as it will be for Winter season. Production is still a little light, but should become more consistent over the next few weeks as more fields come online. Mainland MX's supply is gradually increasing and seasonal volumes are expected to be available in about 2 weeks. The #1 fruit is very nicely shaped and has good quality.

CHILI PEPPERS

There's actually a decent amount of chili peppers in the East this week. Plant City, Immokalee and the East Coast all have some product with jalapenos being the most plentiful. Plant City is just past the halfway point of their season, so we'll expect to see less volume and varieties in a few more weeks as they drop off for the Winter. In the West, volumes are picking up on all of the mainstream varieties except for poblanos. They are the last variety to come online and supply will likely remain snug until the end of the month.

EGGPLANT

With GA out of the picture now, eggplant is a FL deal as it will be for Winter season. Production is still a little light, but should become more consistent over the next few weeks as more fields come online. Mainland MX's supply is gradually increasing and seasonal volumes are expected to be available in about 2 weeks. The #1 fruit is very nicely shaped and has good quality.

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 still very limited. Guasave has started in a light way, but there's really not much volume at this point. Fortunately, it looks like Culiacan will get started in the next 1-2 weeks and help to bring supply back to more reasonable levels.

ORGANIC ROMA

Organic roma availability is slowly improving. Fruit is still available in Baja and Central MX. We'll see Western Mainland MX start up in the next few weeks, taking up where Baja leaves off. Quality has improved over the last week or sound is considered good at this point.

ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

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

ORGANIC MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Organic mini sweets are very limited as we wait for northern Sinaloa to get started. We're hearing a start date of the 2nd week of December, but it may be January until supply is back at comfortable levels.



LIPMAN FAMILY FARM'S CRIMSON TOMATO

WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM

Our Crimson tomatoes add a great pop of cherry red color to your grocery basket, but they're even more exciting and versatile once you get them home!

Don't forget to #addatomato to your grocery list this weekend!



FRESH FOODS RANK HIGH ON THE LIST FOR GROCERS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS

By **Russell Redman**

Oct. 03, 2023

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

Grocery retailers are spot-on in boosting their fresh food offerings to spur growth, as a new Deloitte study shows these departments to be the most important to customers.

Of 2,000 consumers polled, 9 in 10 said fresh food makes them happy, and 91% see fresh food as critical to a healthy diet, according to Deloitte's "Fresh Food at the Intersection of Trust and Transparency" report, released Tuesday. What's more, 68% of respondents—even with inflation hiking prices—indicated they're willing to pay a premium for the "best fresh food," up seven percentage points from last year and similar to 2021 levels, Deloitte reported. On average, these shoppers would pay 28% more for fresh food than frozen, canned or processed options.

Such urgency in purchasing fresh foods bears out grocery retailers' priority in ensuring they optimize these categories and store departments. Of 100 U.S.-based grocery retail executives surveyed from organizations with at 10,000 employees, 64% deem fresh foods as their top strategic avenue for growing sales over the next 12 to 36 months.

Grocery shoppers and retail execs polled agreed that food suppliers have raised prices more than necessary, Deloitte's research found. The New York-based management consultancy said 80% of consumers think food prices have increased more than needed, up seven percentage points from last year's survey. Likewise, 85% of grocery retail execs said of food suppliers that "several" or "most of them" were raising prices more than needed to hoist profits. Just 10% of the grocers polled believed their suppliers were lifting prices to keep up with rising costs.

Despite a letup in food-at-home inflation, 93% of consumers named price as the chief driver in their purchases of fresh foods, followed by health and wellness (86%), convenience (84%), and preserving freshness and reducing food waste (77%). Fresh foods' health benefits rank highly among grocery customers. Eighty-three percent of those surveyed think fresh foods lower the risk of chronic health conditions and disease, and the same percentage believes fresh foods contribute to weight loss.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

December 5-7, 2023

New York Produce Show

BOOTH #418

New York, NY

CHECK OUT OUR VIDEO ON DAY OF GOOD!

THIS #GIVINGTUESDAY WE'RE THANKFUL FOR OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS, WHOM WE WORKED CLOSELY WITH DURING OUR ANNUAL DAY OF GOOD TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED FOOD, RESOURCES, SUPPORT AND SERVICE ACROSS NORTH AMERICA.



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#dayofgood

#givingtuesday

#goodfromthegroundup