

MAY 3, 2024

LIPMANFAMILYFARMS.COM

ON THE H O R I Z O N

*Reliable &
Consistent*

Bringing you your
weekly industry
updates

CROP & MARKET

INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

FL's roma production is now centered in the R/P area with a few still harvesting to the south. Overall production is moderate, although yields are down from what we normally see in R/P. Lipman will finish up 2nd picks in Estero in the next few days, but will continue to harvest in the R/P area. Crown pick quality is good and sizing is on the larger end of the spectrum (mostly jumbo & XL). Crown pick fruit quality is best, but we are seeing some puffiness due to hot temperatures and wind scarring on later harvests. MX has romas to offer from Baja, East MX, and West MX. Sinaloa crops are on the way out, while Sonora plantings should run into June/July, depending on weather, quality and markets. East MX is just getting started and we'll see volume from this area gradually pick up as more crops come online between now and June. Baja has started in a light way with more areas to come online in the next 7-10 days. Looking ahead, we should begin to see domestic crops in CA add to the mix in June/July.

ROUND TOMATOES

Eastern round tomato production is now centered in FL's R/P area where yields are lighter than seasons past. Volume has been relatively steady although there are some ups and downs as plantings come together for various growers. Crown picks are heavy to big sizes and overall quality is good despite some wind scarring here and there. Lipman will finish up with 2nds in Estero over the next week or so, then will be harvesting solely in the R/P area for the next few weeks. MX's round tomato supply is on the lighter side as growers work through a transition period. West MX is winding down soon, expecting to be finished by June. East MX and Baja are just getting started with light volumes. We should gradually see more volume from these programs as the month progresses.

GRAPE TOMATOES

FL's grape tomato growers have had a push of volume this week but have been relatively steady with production otherwise. Lipman is harvesting in both Estero and the R/P area now, but will finish up down south over the next few days. Quality has been good from the newer plantings, but yields have been lower on older crops as we grade out some sun damage. In the West, volumes have been moderate and ample out of Sinaloa. Quality is

becoming a little suspect as the plants age. We are seeing shrivel, sunscald, and translucency on some lots, while others are just fine. Expect mostly the same until Baja gets going with new crops in a few weeks.

GREEN BEANS

Transition is the theme in the East this week. The Lake area has finished bean crops and south FL is not far behind. North FL is still in business, but GA has gotten underway this week. Volume is still light but we expect to see increases over the next 7-10 days as more fields come online. In the West, growers in Mainland MX still have light to moderate volumes, but are approaching the end of the season in about 2 weeks. Quality has been good from most, but there are some beans with lesser quality coming into Nogales. There are a few beans in CA (Coachella and Orange Co) that will have to bridge the gap between Mainland and Baja, which is on tap to start late in the month. Additional growing areas in CA will also come online in the coming weeks.

COLOR BELL PEPPERS

As Western Mainland MX's crops finish up, we're seeing availability on mostly large and medium sizing, which moves the focus to Central MX's Summer crops and our northern neighbors in CAN for retail product. Central MX houses are in a moderate volume mode and will continue at this pace for the near future. CAN has production in both the east and west and has had solid numbers and great quality.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

The East's overall bell pepper volume has dropped for the short term as production is in transition. There are a few late fields in south FL that are still going but this is mostly choice and small fruit with some quality challenges. Plant City is the place for large sizing (jumbo and 2X) as they are harvesting mostly crown picks right now, but their volume is just moderate. Look for GA to get started in 10-14 days with bigger volumes coming once they are fully rolling. Looking to the West, Mainland MX is headed toward the end of the season quickly with volume, size and quality declining. Most are now looking to the new fields coming from the Coachella area. Sizing is on the larger end of the spectrum and quality has been excellent so far.

[CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE](#)



YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

GA is already into good volumes on squash after getting started last week. Quality has been okay so far on zucchini, but the yellow is not quite as sharp. We're looking for some improvements as growers move deeper into the harvests. Meanwhile, Plant City continues to harvest, focusing on the better quality fruit from new fields, as demand has been weak. For the West, Sonora has good volumes on zucchini and lighter numbers on yellow squash. Quality is good on both colors. They should continue in this mode for the next 10-14 days, then we expect to see a drop in production. Markets have been depressed so the growers who decided not to put full resources into their last fields will finish up. Those who stayed on track with the process are looking to go into June with supplies. On the domestic side of things, we are seeing some squash from the Coachella valley and we expect the Santa Maria area to get rolling in late May.

CUCUMBERS

As with bell peppers, cucumbers are transitioning in the East. South FL has a few late fields still in action, but they'll wrap up within the next 2 weeks. Plant City has been in production for a few weeks but it's not been a particularly strong crop in terms of volume. Quality, however, has been pretty good despite some wind scarring here and there. GA is the next place that will have volumes and they just got started this week. In 5-7 days, they will be working their way into seasonal numbers and be the mainstay of Eastern supply. The West continues to have moderate to good volumes of cucumbers available with fruit coming from several growing areas. Sinaloa still has fruit, but things are winding down with less volume and quality. Sonora looks to continue through May and possibly into June with adequate supplies if weather and quality allow. Central MX and Baja also have cucumbers available. So far, Baja's production has been limited but we should see volume increase over the next 2-3 weeks.

HARD SQUASH

A few FL acorns are now showing up, but the East's butternut and spaghetti are still a Honduras deal. They are closing in on the end of the season, but will likely have product for another 3-4 weeks. We should see some squash out of GA by then. The West still has hard squash coming out of Sonora, but acorn and spaghetti volumes are on the lighter side. Hopefully Sonora's storage inventory will last until CA gets up and running in 3-4 weeks.

CHILI PEPPERS

After a long spell of light supply, Plant City's chili pepper crops are up and running! They have most items available with lighter numbers on Hungarians and poblanos. No quality issues have been reported thus far. We also expect to see GA get started in the next 2-3 weeks, which will further solidify Eastern supply. MX's chili pepper volumes are starting to improve slightly. Sinaloa finished up early and Sonora wasn't quite online, creating a short supply situation, right in time for Cinco de Mayo. Warm weather is starting to bring the Sonora fruit on gradually. In another 7-10 days, Sonora should be closer to seasonal volumes and Baja will get started. At this time, poblanos and serranos are still extremely scarce, but that should improve as more growers get started /further into crops in Sonora.

EGGPLANT

After a long period of light supply, the East now has an oversupply of eggplant as Plant City is fully in harvest with lots of nice-quality fruit. GA will be the next major area of production and they should come online in a few more weeks. Sinaloa will have product for another 2-3 weeks, but volume has lightened up and quality is just average. Production will transition to CA and Baja. The CA desert has started with their cannonball varieties, which won't work for all retailers, but other areas should get started in the next 2-3 weeks with the traditional teardrop-shaped fruit.

CALABACITA

Calabacita supply is adequate with most of the fruit coming from the Sonora area.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS

With Mainland MX crops finishing up and just a few scattered in Central MX, CAN and domestic CA programs, supply is really snug. It looks like we've reached that time of year where supply will be tight until Baja gets going until late June/ early July. Quality is varied and we're monitoring closely.

ORGANIC ROMA

With new crops underway in Mainland MX, the organic roma supply should be adequate for the next 4-6 weeks. Quality is great on the newer shadehouse crops, but there is still some older fruit around with poor quality.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Mainland MX growers are winding down the season with lighter volumes and a mix of quality, depending on the stage of crop the fruit was harvested from. Supply could get a little snug between now and when Baja fully comes online in 2-3 weeks.

ORGANIC MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Organic mini sweet supply continues to be limited. Supply looks to remain short until Baja's new crops get started in mid-late June. Current quality is okay but greening and poor color mix are consistent concerns to work with.

ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

There's moderate supply of organic mini cucumbers with a mix of older and newer crops in Mainland MX and Baja. Supply is expected to be fairly steady through the month of May. Quality is hit or miss by grower with some lots having stem and end concerns.

ORGANIC COLOR PEPPERS

Organic colored bell pepper availability is expected to be very limited out of MX for the next several weeks. There will be a bit more supply come online from East MX, but this area's Summer acreage is expected to be down this year. Right now, we are waiting for CAN's supply to come online in the next few weeks, which should provide consistent availability.



TRENDING IN RETAIL: WHAT SHOPPERS WANT IN THE PRODUCE AISLE

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

BY AMANDA BALTAZAR

U.S. shoppers continue to drive diversity and innovation in the produce aisles of grocery stores. Top of mind are health and convenience for many people, but having fun and experimenting with new and unusual items are also key.

Today's consumers are looking for unusual produce to add excitement to their plates. Exotic fruits and vegetables are becoming better known, and Asian food in particular is becoming popular in the U.S., said Robert Schueller, spokesperson for Los Angeles-based Melissa's Produce.

Frieda's Branded Produce, Anaheim, Calif., has a particular focus on Asian vegetables, such as purple sweet potatoes and chayote, so consumers can experiment "right in their own kitchens," said Alex Jackson, vice president of sales and procurement.

Consumers also are looking for color, says Robert Seegmiller, fresh produce sales director for Harmon's, a West Valley City, Utah-based grocery store chain. "This includes the growing popularity of brightly colored produce — like red, yellow and orange bell peppers and rainbow carrots — reflecting an interest in infusing diverse hues into dishes as individuals seek to elevate the visual experience in their meals."

In addition, busy shoppers want convenience with their produce. Shoppers at Hannaford Supermarkets, Scarborough, Maine, are looking for fresh-cut

vegetables that make meal prep easier or healthy snacks that present new flavor combinations, like tahini on freshly cut fruit, says Mike Emery, director of produce merchandising.

Exotic produce saw increases in popularity last year. Papaya sales were up 12.5% and fresh coconut up 11% at retail in the 52 weeks ending Dec. 3, 2023, according to Circana OmniMarket Integrated Fresh, a Chicago-based market research firm.

When it comes to specific produce, dragon fruit is likely to be a standout in 2024. Melissa's offers three varieties (white, yellow, magenta), and HLB Specialties, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is paying particular attention to the fruit since 2024 is the Year of the Dragon on the lunar calendar. The company has adapted its dragon fruit packaging to celebrate this, and Melissa Hartmann de Barros, director of communications, said the fruit resonates with both Asian and American consumers.

At 3 Guys from Brooklyn, a New York retailer where produce sales tend to focus on the basics of potatoes, plum tomatoes and avocados, dragon fruit is one of the unusual sellers, especially around Jewish holidays, says Philip Penta, managing partner.

"They are the most accessible of the exotics," with star fruit coming in second, he said. This is in part because the store can access dragon fruit at a good price and features it in a prominent display just inside the store's doors.

[Keep reading here](#)



FOOD INFLATION DOWN IN Q1, BUT STILL RISING FOR SOME ITEMS

[SUPERMARKETNEWS.COM](https://www.supermarketnews.com)

Timothy Inklebarger | Apr 26, 2024

The rate of price increases dropped in all 10 categories from a year ago

Food inflation “remained stubbornly high” in the first quarter of 2024, although price increase in some categories reached new lows compared to a year ago, according to data analytics company Catalina.

The overall food inflation rate was 3% in the first quarter of 2024, down substantially from the 16% recorded for the same quarter a year ago, according to the report. The inflation rate dropped in all 10 categories from a year ago.

Meanwhile, value brands took a surprising turn with some increasing in cost faster than their premium counterparts, the report noted. Value brand bath tissue, for example, was up 6% for the quarter, while its premium counterpart was down 2%. Value detergent was up 2% compared to premium detergent, which was down 1%.

The Q1 results include:

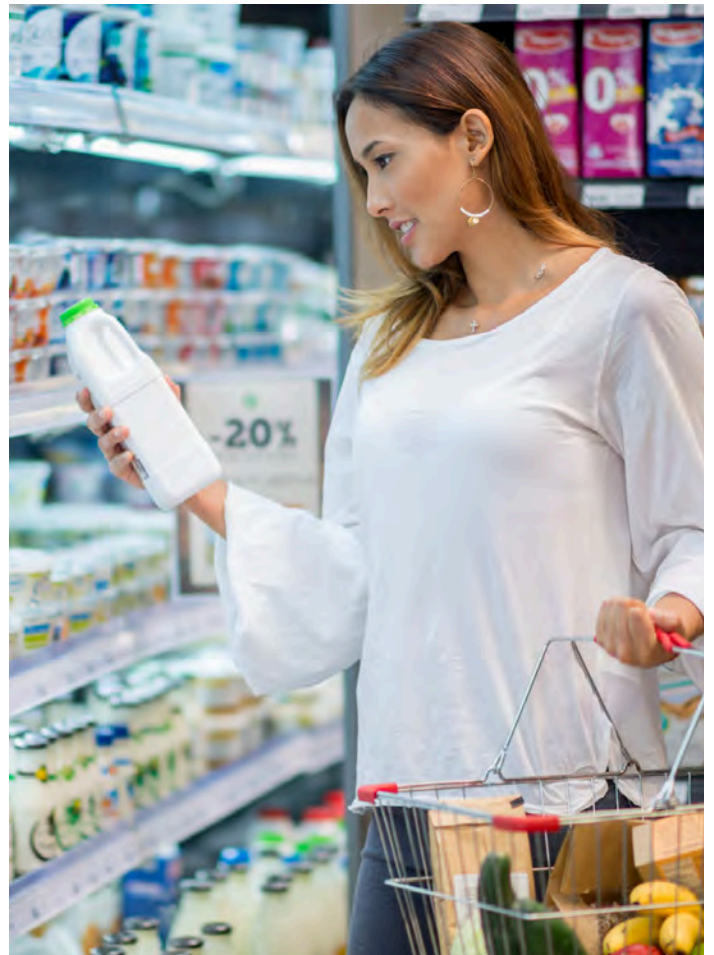
- Hand and bath soaps: 8% in 2024 vs. 17% in 2023
- Deodorants: 6% in 2024 vs. 12% in 2023
- Cereal: 5% in 2024 vs. 21% in 2023
- Soft drinks and water: 4% in 2024 vs. 19% in 2023
- Yogurt: 3% in 2024 vs. 21% in 2023
- Paper products: 2% in 2024 vs. 9% in 2023
- Soaps and detergents: 2% in 2024 vs. 8% in 2023
- Coffee: 1% in 2024 vs. 16% in 2023
- Frozen vegetables: 1% in 2024 vs. 16% in 2023
- Frozen prepared foods: 1% in 2024 vs. 16% in 2023

“Our latest data shows grocery inflation has dropped considerably from a year ago in these 10 categories,” said Wesley Bean, U.S. chief revenue officer at Catalina, in a statement. “While this is positive news overall, it’s important to remember the impact isn’t felt evenly. Value-conscious shoppers are still grappling with significant price increases on

essential items, even as the broader inflation rate cools.”

While main categories saw an overall drop, the inflation rate for some specialty items in those categories rose. For instance, cereal bars were up 13% in Q1. Similarly, read-to-drink coffee drinks were up 3% year over year, while regular coffee declined 1%, coffee pods dropped 2%, and instant coffee was down 3% for the quarter.

“When we drill down to individual products within these 10 categories, we gain insights as to why shoppers say they continue to feel the impact of higher prices, even though the rate of inflation has fallen considerably from six months ago,” Bean said. “Families with children and on-the-go consumers are some of the lifestyle categories continuing to feel the pinch.”



UPCOMING EVENTS:

JULY 10-11, 2024

ORGANIC PRODUCE SUMMIT

Monterey, California

OCTOBER 17-19, 2024

THE GLOBAL PRODUCE & FLORAL SHOW

ATLANTA, GA

MAY IS NATIONAL SALSA MONTH, OUR FAVORITE MONTH! IT'S TIME TO SPICE UP YOUR LIFE AND CELEBRATE THE DELICIOUSNESS OF SALSA ALL MONTH LONG!

JOIN US IN CREATING MOUTHWATERING SALSA RECIPES USING OUR PREMIUM TOMATOES, PEPPERS, AND OTHER FARM-FRESH PRODUCE. 🌶️🍅

CHECK OUT OUR INSTAGRAM
FOR THIS RECIPE

