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ON THE H O R I Z O N

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Bringing you your weekly
industry updates

**CROP &
MARKET**
INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

After a few weeks of lighter yields, Florida's roma tomato production is beginning to pick up. While industry-wide volume remains inconsistent, we expect improved stability once farms in the Palmetto/Ruskin area come online over the next few weeks. Lipman is currently harvesting in Estero and will remain there until transitioning to Ruskin/Palmetto at the end of April. Quality from Estero has been very nice, with a strong percentage of larger-sized fruit. Looking west, Mexico continues to offer solid volumes and quality across multiple regions, including Sinaloa, Sonora, Central Mexico, and Baja. Culiacán and Guasave are still producing from existing acreage, which should carry through late May to early June. Meanwhile, new crops in Hermosillo and Obregón are ramping up, with increased volumes expected in the coming weeks. Quality across all regions has been consistently good.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Grape tomato production has improved this week in Florida, thanks to favorable weather that has boosted yields and volume. Lipman continues harvesting in Estero and is set to begin picking in the Ruskin/Palmetto fields within the next 5–7 days. Quality has been good overall, though some lots have shown minor sunburn, which is being graded out. In Mexico, moderate to high volumes are available this week. The Culiacán region is expected to maintain steady production through April before tapering off in May. Fortunately, new fields will begin to come online in both Eastern/Central Mexico and Baja over the next several weeks, which should help maintain consistent supply. While quality has been generally good, there have been some isolated concerns in Mexico related to past temperature fluctuations.

ROUND TOMATOES

Florida round tomato production has rebounded following a low-yield period caused by cold weather during fruit set. Warmer conditions have since accelerated growth and maturity, resulting in solid supply levels this week. Lipman will continue harvesting in Estero for the next few weeks, while other growers are expected to begin in the Ruskin/Palmetto region as early as next week, with Lipman's new fields coming online by the end of April. Current quality is excellent, and sizing is trending heavily toward 5x6s. In Mexico, supply remains strong, with the majority of fruit still coming out of the Culiacán area. Sizing there is skewing toward mid-size, but overall quality is holding up well. Looking ahead, Baja is expected to begin harvesting in mid-May, which will coincide with the seasonal slowdown in West Mexico.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Mexico's Sinaloa area continues to have consistent volumes of grape tomatoes available. However, quality is not quite as consistent, especially on fruit with higher color. We're seeing some shrivel, splits and decay on some of the high-color product. Look for availability to continue at current levels for at least a few more weeks. Baja will be the next production area, and they are set to start in mid-late May.

ORGANIC ROMA TOMATOES

Organic roma tomatoes are available in adequate volumes but quality continues to be an issue. Some of the fruit is showing softness, abnormal color, and is breaking down quickly. A short-term crop in Sonora is going to start next week, which could help the quality situation.

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ENGLISH CUCUMBERS

With more Florida crops coming online, cucumber supply is becoming steady, and we expect this trend to continue for the next few weeks. By early-mid May, supply and production will transition to Georgia. So far, quality has been good, with no major concerns reported. Between Sinaloa, Central Mexico, Sonora and Baja, Mexico's cucumber supply is moderate this week. Sinaloa still has the strongest volumes and expects to continue until mid-late May. Volumes are still light in Baja, but we'll see more growers come online and the volume pick up in mid-late May. Quality continues to be strong on Mexico's product.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Mini sweet pepper volumes out of West Mexico are beginning to lighten as the region moves into the downhill side of its season. While product should remain available through the rest of April, supply may become more inconsistent by May. Canada typically does not produce significant volume of this item, so availability could be challenging until Baja's season begins in late June to early July.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Bell pepper supply is snug this week. In Florida, many older fields are still in production, primarily yielding off-grade fruit and smaller sizes. A few newer fields have come online with better quality and larger sizing, but XL fruit—preferred by many retailers—remains tight. Quality is strongest in these newer fields, while older plantings are producing fruit with notable scarring and some decay. Overall supply is expected to remain light through April. Plant City is projected to begin in a limited way in about two weeks, with Georgia following soon after. Out West, the story is similar. Current crops in Mexico are nearing the end of their season. While some fruit will remain available for the next few weeks, both sizing and quality are likely to be inconsistent during this final stretch. Domestic production in the West is set to begin with Coachella, where harvests are expected to kick off in early to mid-May, depending on the grower.

GREEN BEANS

Green bean supplies remain light out of Florida this week, as earlier weather challenges continue to impact yields—a trend that's expected to persist through the end of April. North Florida farms are projected to begin harvest in early May, which should help improve overall volumes. Some short-term quality concerns may arise due to recent wind and rain, but conditions are expected to stabilize quickly. In Mexico, supply is similarly limited due to lingering weather effects and ongoing water availability issues. Growers there anticipate continued tight supply through the end of their season in mid-to-late May. Current quality is rated as fair, with immaturity and russetting being the primary concerns.

CUCUMBERS

South Florida continues to offer a steady, moderate supply of cucumbers from its Spring crops. This area will have cucumbers for the next 3–4 weeks before the season comes to an end. Additional supply will begin to emerge in the coming weeks from other areas, including Plant City, which is set to start harvesting within the next 5–7 days. Quality has been solid overall, though we may start to see more off-grade fruit as growers work through the crops. By early May, Georgia will begin harvesting, with more regions to follow shortly after. In Mexico, cucumber volumes remain moderate and consistent with last week. Multiple growing regions, including Baja, are contributing to supply. Quality has been good across the board, with Baja's fruit being the strongest.

CHILI PEPPERS

South Florida has light to moderate supplies of chili peppers this week. Habanero and poblano volumes are beginning to taper off, but there are still adequate supplies of other chili varieties. Quality has been good from newer plantings, while fruit from older fields has been more variable. As the season progresses, production will begin shifting north, with Plant City expected to get underway in the next 2–3 weeks. Chili pepper production continues across multiple regions in Mexico, with the strongest supplies currently coming from Central Mexico and Sonora. While volumes on Anaheims and serranos are light, most other varieties are seeing moderate to good availability. Overall quality has been solid, with the exception of tomatillos, which are rated as fair due to ongoing husk issues. Baja has started to trickle in a small volume of jalapeños, and we expect additional varieties and stronger volumes from the region in the coming weeks.

WATERMELON

Melon production in the Immokalee area of Florida is running consistently, with both quality and yields tracking above average. Barring any major weather disruptions, production is expected to continue through the remainder of April. Harvests will then begin transitioning north to Central Florida in May, ensuring continued availability as the season progresses.

EGGPLANT

Eggplant supplies remain very limited in Florida, but that is expected to improve in the next 2–3 weeks as production begins in the Plant City area. In Mexico, the season is entering its latter stages, with sizing trending smaller—mostly 24-count fruit—and overall quality rated as fair. Sinaloa's production is expected to continue through mid-May, at which point new crops from the Coachella, CA region will come online and help support the market demand.



WHY A FAST NICKEL IS BETTER THAN A SLOW DIME, EVERY TIME

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

April 3, 2025

A misguided approach to pricing can cost you loyal customers. Columnist Armand Lobato discusses how to achieve sales goals and keep shoppers satisfied. The principle was simple but effective: Offer convenience, service and low pricing, but make up for thin margins with gross sales volume. Somewhere along the line, many grocers have lost their way.

To this produce scribe, it was always ingrained to us in our lion's share, market-leader chain with this tried-and-true grocery edict: "A fast nickel is better than a slow dime." What does that mean? To both newbies and senior movers and shakers out there, it means that to reach your sales goals, your gross profit goals, your shrink goals and all the other related goals, you must strive to be intensely competitive.

Your customers are a savvy lot. They notice when the packaging is less, but prices remain the same — known as shrinkflation, another relatively new but negative word. And shoppers certainly notice rising prices.

When a grocer raises prices regularly for long enough, it's a given that those levels reach a point in the overall cycle that it invites in new competition willing to undercut that pricing. That's competition willing to operate on, say, a 2% net margin versus your 4 cents or 6 cents that you have come to enjoy on each sales dollar. What about those loyal customers you've earned over the years? They absolutely will vote with their feet, as the saying goes, and will shop elsewhere if given the opportunity. In a heartbeat.

And all because you gave into the pressure to raise prices willy-nilly — because that's the easy thing to do, the only action that comes to mind. It's the first line of defense to keep sales at a rate, all which seems so important in the moment.

But you must consider where that money is generated from in the first place: your customers. Alternatively, try to keep your customers satisfied without sacrificing quality. It's difficult to ingrain this in today's mindset, but grocers must remember the very premise that built the business to begin with: A fast nickel is better than a slow dime. The phrase may seem redundant, but it merits repetition.

You will sell more groceries, more meat, more bread and more fresh produce if you aggressively price your goods to move volume. Consider, the more volume you move, the more nickels. The more nickels, the higher your sales, which generates more gross profit dollars.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

WHY FOOD ALLERGIES COULD BE A BIG OPPORTUNITY FOR RESTAURANTS

RESTAURANTBUSINESSONLINE.COM

APRIL 8, 2025

Want to boost your restaurant's profit margins by about a quarter? Try marketing to people with food allergies. That's one of the big takeaways from a report this week published by tech supplier EveryBite and the nonprofit Food Allergy Research & Education, or FARE. According to the report, people with food allergies are great restaurant customers. They tend to spend more when they dine out, and they are more loyal to their favorite restaurants than the average consumer. They are also a significant market: About 1 in every 10 Americans has a food allergy, and together, they spend \$19 billion a year on food.

That makes the food allergy community a potentially valuable untapped opportunity for restaurants, which could increase their profit margins by up to 24% by offering allergy-friendly meals, but the industry has not historically done a good job of catering to this group. For instance, staff are not always trained to ask customers about allergies, or they may not even be aware what allergens are in a given dish. This can be frustrating for people with allergies, and it creates friction for both sides. At the same time, restaurants typically have no idea just how many of their customers have food allergies.

At the root of this whole issue is, of course, the menu. What's on the menu and how those items are presented can make or break a food-allergic customer's decision to visit a given restaurant. With that in mind, FARE teamed up with EveryBite, which helps restaurants create dynamic digital menus that can be filtered by allergen, ingredient or other dietary preferences. Besides aiming to make the ordering experience less painful, EveryBite also allows restaurants to collect data on their customers' preferences. For instance, they can see how many of their customers have a wheat allergy or a dairy allergy, putting hard data behind what is today largely anecdotal.

The report also dovetails with restaurants' transformation into a more data-driven industry. The rise of online ordering has given restaurants more insight into customer preferences than ever before. Food allergies are a crucial data point that operators may want to take into account.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

APRIL 13-15, 2025

**IFPA'S WOMENS FRESH PERSPECTIVES
EXPO**

PARK HYATT AVIARA RESORT
CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA

<https://www.freshproduce.com/events/womens-fresh-perspectives-conference/>

MAY 28-30

WEST COAST PRODUCE EXPO

JW MARRIOTT DESERT SPRINGS RESORT
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

<https://events.farmjournal.com/west-coast-produce-expo-2025/6970017>

TOMATO SNAPSHOT

It all started with a tomato.
Lipman has been growing
fresh, flavorful tomatoes for
generations. The crop that
made us who we are, from
our fields to your plate.

