

MAY 2, 2025

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ON THE H O R I Z O N

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industry updates

**CROP &
MARKET**
INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

Florida's Roma tomato production is moderate this week, with the majority of volume coming from the Ruskin/Palmetto area. Lipman continues to harvest some second and third picks in Estero but expects to wrap up there shortly. Looking ahead, next week's harvests in Ruskin/Palmetto are projected to bring a boost in volume. Quality has been strong, and all sizing options are currently available. In Mexico, production is more variable as the region works through a seasonal transition. Sinaloa is winding down, while new crops have started in Sonora. Additional fields are set to begin in Baja and Central Mexico over the next 10–14 days, which should help stabilize both quality and availability moving forward.

ROUND TOMATOES

The Palmetto/Ruskin area in Florida is now in full production, with moderate to strong volumes of round tomatoes. Lipman reports good quality and sizing, and a strong harvest is expected next week. In Mexico, production is in transition as Culiacan begins to slow down, with mostly mid-sized fruit coming out of the region. However, new crops have started this week in Jalisco, and Baja is set to begin harvesting in 7–10 days. These new plantings should help maintain steady availability as older regions taper off.

TOMATO ON THE VINE (TOVs)

Canada's new crops are delivering consistent and solid availability of TOVs. All growers are now fully operational, and the fruit is coming in with strong sizing and excellent quality. With favorable growing conditions and all regions online, Canada is well-positioned to provide steady volumes and top-grade product for the coming weeks.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Florida continues to have excellent volumes of grape tomatoes, with most of the production now centered in the Ruskin/Palmetto area. Lipman is still harvesting some fruit in Estero but is expected to wrap up there and transition fully to Ruskin/Palmetto within the next 7–10 days. Quality and sizing have been consistently good, and as we get further into the crop, next week is shaping up to be a strong production week. Although production is starting to wind down in Culiacan, Mexico continues to offer consistent volumes of grape tomatoes this week. New fields have recently started in both Baja and East/Central Mexico, helping to keep overall availability steady. This regional overlap is supporting good supply continuity as older areas taper off.

ORGANIC MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Organic mini sweet pepper supplies are limited as the Sinaloa season enters its final stretch, but current volume remains sufficient to meet demand. This supply scenario is expected to hold steady for the next few weeks. Harvests from Sinaloa should continue through mid-June, at which point production will transition to Baja. While good-quality fruit is still available, we are closely monitoring inbound loads for common late-season quality issues, including softness, shriveling, and tip decay. As always during this time of year, careful rotation and inventory management are key to maintaining shelf life and presentation.

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ENGLISH CUCUMBERS

English hot house cucumbers are shaping up to be a promotable item for the next few weeks, thanks to abundant volumes coming out of Canada. Quality has been consistently good, and overall supply is strong. While a few year-round programs in Mexico continue to provide light volume, Canada has the bulk of supply.

BELL PEPPERS

Canada continues to provide steady supplies of nice quality red, yellow and orange bell peppers. Sizing has begun to come down, with more fruit falling in the XL range this week and quality is good. Growers project a flush at the end of May as plantings and harvests come together. Central Mexico continues to offer light availability following the conclusion of several growers' crops. New fields are expected to begin harvest at the end of May, which should help bolster supply.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

South Florida bell pepper production has now wrapped up for all practical purposes. This week, we're beginning to see light harvests coming out of the Plant City area in Central Florida. Overall acreage in Central Florida is limited, so supplies are expected to remain light for the next two weeks. We anticipate improved availability once Georgia's season begins in the 2nd week of May. In the meantime, quality from the early Central Florida crops has been nice, with good condition and sizing observed so far. In the West, the California desert region has now started harvesting bell peppers, with initial picks showing mostly larger-sized fruit and solid quality. This new production is helping to support overall supply as Mexico begins winding down. Mexican growers still have some fruit available, but volumes are declining, and both sizing and quality have become more limited. We expect most Mexican production to finish within the next few weeks, making California the primary source moving forward.

CUCUMBERS

Cucumber production remains light in the Eastern U.S. this week, but increased volume is on the horizon. Central Florida and the East Coast in South Florida are harvesting small amounts, while Georgia is expected to ramp up significantly over the next 7–10 days. Early reports indicate good quality from the initial Florida fields, and Georgia's crops are also showing strong potential. Barring any weather setbacks, supplies should improve steadily as Georgia moves into more consistent production. In the West, Mainland Mexico and Baja are supplying moderate volumes with good quality overall. West Mexico is expected to taper off soon, while Central Mexico should remain steady and Baja production is poised to ramp up, ensuring supply through the next several weeks.

GREEN BEANS

Green bean supply is extremely tight this week as South Florida crops finish up for the season. Georgia is expected to begin harvesting in the next few days, which should gradually improve availability as volume builds. The West is facing similar shortages, with Mexico's production winding down over the next 10–14 days. Current Mexican supplies are light and quality has been mediocre. Relief is expected from the California desert, where harvests are slated to begin in the latter part of next week.

CHILI PEPPERS

Although there are a few jalapenos remaining in South Florida, Plant City is now actively harvesting most chili varieties this week. We expect consistent availability from this area for at least the next few weeks. Overall quality has been nice from the fresh fields. In the West, chili peppers are available from several growing regions, with Central Mexico currently offering the strongest volumes. Overall supply remains on the lighter side, particularly for serranos, though quality is holding up well on most items. Dry husk issues are still a concern on tomatillos, and there have been some reported issues with serranos. On the domestic side, California growers are expected to get started within the week.

HARD SQUASH

Mexico remains the primary source for hard squash, though volumes are shifting as the season progresses. Supplies of butternut and spaghetti squash have begun to lighten, while acorn squash is currently available at moderate levels. Some new crop butternut is expected to start soon, which should help stabilize supply out of the Sonora region for the remainder of the season. Overall quality has been solid, with some typical scarring seen on spaghetti squash. Mexico will continue to lead production through June, at which point California's Bakersfield region is expected to begin. In the East, aside from a few imported Honduran butternut shipments, there is minimal hard squash activity—and that's not expected to change for at least another month.

WATERMELON

Watermelon production has finished in the Immokalee, FL area and has now moved up to Central Florida. Crops have experienced extreme draught and heat conditions during the growing cycle and look to have lighter than desired yields and are slow to come online. Harvests should begin around May 10th.



LIPMAN FAMILY FARMS ACQUIRES TENNESSEE'S SHELTON & SONS

THEPACKER.COM

April 29, 2025



Lipman Family Farms has acquired Morristown, Tenn.-based tomato grower Shelton & Sons. The company says the acquisition strengthens Lipman's domestic footprint and reinforces its ability to supply consistent, high-quality roma tomatoes year-round, solidifying the critical July through October growing season.

Shelton & Sons has been a dedicated partner in Lipman's local grower network for decades, contributing to Lipman's seasonal success with roma tomatoes in the eastern U.S., according to a release. Lipman says Shelton & Sons' long-standing reputation for excellence and integrity in farming aligns with its values around family, quality and community.

"For years, Shelton & Sons has helped us deliver the freshest product to our customers during peak season," said Lipman Family Farms CEO Elyse Lipman. "Their deep history in family farming and consistent supply makes them a natural extension of our team. We're honored to bring them fully into the Lipman network."

With this acquisition, Lipman strengthens its regional supply chain during summer and fall months and continues its investment in reliable, domestic agriculture, the release said. Shelton & Sons will maintain its focus on roma tomato production, offering customers continuity with the added support of Lipman's nationwide infrastructure.

"Our family has been growing tomatoes in Morristown for decades, and Lipman has been a trusted partner through it all," said Terry Cantrell of Shelton & Sons. "Joining the Lipman family feels like a natural next step that lets us continue on the legacy of farming with purpose."

This marks the third major acquisition in the last eighteen months for [Lipman Family Farms](#). In 2024, the company welcomed another longtime roma tomato partner, [Jones & Church Farms](#) of Unicoi, Tenn., and expanded in the Northeast market with the acquisition of Northeast Produce, a tomato repacker in Connecticut. "We are dedicated to growing our team with like-minded companies and individuals so we can continue to make fresh produce accessible to families for generations to come," Lipman said.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

MISTRUST ON THE MENU: HOW CONSUMERS ARE NAVIGATING CONFUSING FOOD CHOICES

[SMARTBRIEF.COM](https://www.smartbrief.com)

APRIL 26, 2025

If there's a word to describe how consumers feel about health and nutrition today, it may be this: Confusion. From ultra-processed foods and artificial colorings to seed oils, microplastics and hidden toxins, consumers face a constant stream of warnings and evolving concerns that challenge their ability to make informed choices. When something deemed healthy one day can be questioned or even shunned the next, even familiar products may suddenly raise red flags. In a time of conflicting opinions and eroding institutional trust, many consumers are turning inward—relying on personal research and gut feelings to guide their food choices. Here's a look at two main ingredients raising concerns, along with key insights on where consumers get their health information, whom they trust, and how they navigate ongoing challenges.

THE RISE OF INGREDIENT AVOIDANCE

First, a stunning statistic: Over 80% of consumers actively avoid or limit at least one ingredient or food attribute. And more than a third of consumers have taken action in some way: cutting back on or completely avoiding high-fructose corn syrup, unhealthy fats, and artificial coloring, while nearly a third limit alcohol, sugar, and artificial flavorings. Women, Gen X, boomers and higher-income consumers are the most likely to avoid specific ingredients, whereas millennials are the likeliest generation to say they don't avoid anything at all.

INGREDIENTS RAISING RED FLAGS

Two main food components and ingredients raising concerns with consumers are artificial dyes and seed oils. Sixty-one percent of consumers say they distrust brands that rely heavily on artificial colors to make their products look more appealing. Brightly colored foods often trigger concern, as many consumers associate them with artificial ingredients and over-processing. Nearly two-thirds worry about potential health risks from synthetic dyes, and many already avoid products containing Red Dye No. 3. The recent FDA ban on the dye has only reinforced these concerns. Two-thirds of consumers express some level of concern about seed oils. But despite the growing conversation around seed oils, only a small percentage of consumers actively avoid them. Those who do avoid them tend to be skeptical of mainstream health advice and instead trust their own judgment and inner circles (family, friends) for guidance. When choosing alternatives, they are most likely to opt for olive oil, avocado oil or butter for cooking. Compared to non-avoiders, seed oil avoiders tend to approach most sources of health information with heightened skepticism.

In an environment of increasing skepticism, evolving health concerns and shifting sources of trust, food brands, retailers and restaurants must navigate these consumer perceptions carefully. Transparency, ingredient sourcing and clear communication will be key to maintaining consumer confidence in an era where trust is harder than ever to earn.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JULY 9-10

ORGANIC PRODUCE SUMMIT

MONTEREY CONFERENCE CENTER

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

<https://www.organicproducesummit.com/en/home.html>

JULY 31 - AUGUST 1

IFPA FOODSERVICE CONFERENCE

MONTEREY CONFERENCE CENTER

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

<https://www.freshproduce.com/events/the-foodservice-conference/>

TOMATO SNAPSHOT

MEET THE FACES BEHIND YOUR
FRESH PRODUCE! 🧑🌾🧑🌾 THIS
MAY, WE'RE CELEBRATING THE
LOCAL FARMERS GROWING
GOODNESS FROM THE GROUND
UP. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR OUR
UPCOMING INDIVIDUAL
SPOTLIGHTS—STARTING WITH
LACY ON MAY 15!
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