MAY 9, 2025

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CROP & MARKET

INDUSTRY INFO

LIPMAN family farms®

MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

Ruskin/Palmetto continues to be the primary production area for roma tomatoes in the East, although Lipman is finishing up some remaining harvests in Estero. Yields in P/R are lighter than usual due to the extreme heat and drought conditions during the growing cycle, which means these crops are likely to finish earlier than expected, potentially before the end of May. As the season winds down in the East, attention will shift to Mexico for roma supply during June. While there will be some light volumes from the Quincy and South Georgia areas, these regions have significantly less acreage than Ruskin/Palmetto or South Florida. The next major East Coast area for romas will be Tennessee, which typically begins production around the July 4th holiday. Roma tomato production in West Mexico remains moderate but is expected to lighten up as we move through the remainder of May. Both Baja and Central Mexico have recently started new crops, with volume expected to increase in the next 2-3 weeks as production ramps up. Quality can be more challenging on fruit from the older fields and growing areas, with some variability in appearance and firmness. However, quality from the newer crops looks promising, with solid sizing and better overall consistency.

TOMATO ON THE VINE (TOVs)

TOV availability is solid this week, with product coming from multiple regions including Canada, Mexico, California, and other growing areas. Supplies are steady across the board, and quality has been consistently strong—good sizing, vibrant color, and clean, firm fruit with no major issues reported.

ROUND TOMATOES

While Lipman still has a few second and third picks remaining in Estero, the bulk of harvest activity has shifted to the Ruskin/Palmetto region, where production has been fairly consistent. Quality is good overall, with only light scarring reported, and sizing remains in the 5x6 range—slightly smaller than earlier fruit from South Florida. Overall state volume is down due to ongoing heat and drought conditions, which have impacted yields in the current growing areas. Harvests are expected to continue through May, though some crops may finish earlier than planned. Looking ahead, both South Carolina and Quincy, FL are set to begin in the first week of June, with some early fruit possible the week prior thanks to sustained warm weather. In Mexico, Culiacan is on the downhill side of its season, now producing mostly 5x5s and smaller fruit. Harvests from this region are expected to wrap up by the end of May or early June. Meanwhile, Baja has just begun harvesting this week, starting with light volumes. Supply from Baja will steadily increase over the next few weeks as additional growers come online and more acreage enters production. This transition period may bring some short-term variability in size and availability, but volume is expected to stabilize by mid-June.

MINI CUCUMBERS

Supply of mini cucumbers is steady and solid out of Canada this week, with quality reported as very nice—clean appearance, good sizing, and strong shelf life. In addition, some supplemental volume is available from Mexico, helping to support demand, though Canadian product remains the primary driver of the market.

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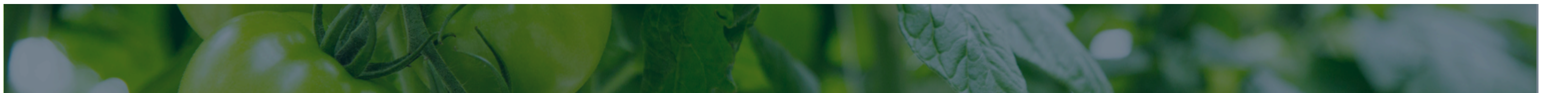

GRAPE TOMATOES

Florida's grape tomato supply remains strong this week, with solid volume expected for at least another week before gradually tapering off through late May. Lipman has completed harvests in Estero and is now actively harvesting in the Ruskin/Palmetto region. Quality has been good overall, especially after careful grading to remove any fruit affected by recent heat. Looking ahead, South Carolina crops are trending slightly ahead of schedule, with harvests likely to begin in the last week of May. This early start should help ensure a smooth regional transition and maintain steady supply into June. Grape tomato volumes are relatively light out of Mexico this week as the Culiacan season winds down and new crops in Baja and Central Mexico are just getting started. Quality has been fair from older fields, with some signs of aging, but is showing noticeable improvement in the newer production areas. As growers progress further into their crops and begin harvesting from multiple plantings, volumes are expected to increase steadily over the coming weeks.

CUCUMBERS

While a few cucumbers are still coming out of Florida, the bulk of Eastern production has now transitioned to Georgia, where growers are reporting good volumes and nice quality. In the coming weeks, supply will be further boosted as North Carolina and other regional programs come online. In the West, moderate supply continues with fruit coming from Sonora, Sinaloa, Central Mexico, and Baja. Depending on weather and market conditions, Sonora and Sinaloa could continue harvesting for another 3–4 weeks. Overall quality has been good, with the best fruit currently coming from the newer crops in Baja and Central Mexico.

ENGLISH CUCUMBERS

The marketplace continues to see an abundance of English cucumbers, with strong supply coming from both Eastern and Western Canada. Quality has been consistently favorable, with good sizing, uniform shape, and excellent appearance, making them a reliable choice for retail displays and fresh-cut foodservice programs. This solid availability is expected to continue through the month of May, with only a slight reduction anticipated as some growers begin transitioning between plantings. Overall, it remains an ideal time to feature or promote English cucumbers across all channels.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Volume remains light in the East, with limited harvests still underway in Plant City. Georgia is set to begin this weekend, and volume is expected to build over the next 7–10 days. Quality has been good overall, with no major concerns reported. In the West, Mexico is in the later stages of its season. Production is coming mostly from older fields, resulting in smaller sizing, fair quality, and a high percentage of off-grade fruit. California has now started harvesting, with very nice quality and larger sizing due to the predominance of crown-pick fruit.

CHILI PEPPERS

Eastern chili pepper production has transitioned into the Plant City, FL area, where most varieties are available in light to moderate volumes. Quality has been good across the board, with no major issues reported. Georgia is expected to begin its chili pepper harvests within the next 10–14 days, which will help strengthen supply in the East. In the West, moderate volumes continue from Baja, Western, and Central Mexico, with good quality overall—except for tomatillos, particularly husked varieties, where quality has been only fair. California has also begun harvesting in a light way, adding to the early-season Western supply.

GREEN BEANS

Florida's bean season has wrapped up, but Georgia has just started harvesting in a light way. We expect more substantial volumes to come online in the next 7–10 days as additional fields enter production. In the West, Mexico is winding down its season with just about two weeks left to go. Quality is marginal at this stage, and production is light. The California desert has started with small volumes, but we anticipate more significant supplies to begin flowing by June. Until then, Western green bean supply will remain tight.

WATERMELON

Central Florida's watermelon season is now underway, though yields are lighter than normal due to heat and drought during the growing cycle. Seedless melons are more readily available than seeded, which remain in limited supply. Early harvests have shown a trend toward larger sizing, offering strong presentation at retail. Central Florida is expected to remain in production through the first week of June, at which point harvests will begin to ramp up in Georgia and North Florida, helping to maintain supply continuity.

RETAIL FOODSERVICE TRENDS: GROCERY STORES GETTING IT RIGHT

SUPERMARKETPERIMETER.COM April 29, 2025

Finding new ways to blur the line between retail and foodservice continues to be a great move for retailers who want to show their customers that the grocery store is a more-than-viable option to sit-down restaurants or take-out.

A strategic imperative

In today's rapidly shifting landscape, the convergence of foodservice and retail isn't just a trend, it's a strategic imperative for businesses looking to innovate and thrive. Retailers integrating foodservice offerings are discovering new ways to elevate customer experience, boost brand loyalty and unlock additional revenue streams. The question is no longer whether foodservice belongs in retail but how best to implement and scale it most effectively. Historically, retail and foodservice operated in silos — retail focused on goods, foodservice on meals. But today's consumers demand more: convenience, personalization and experience-driven shopping. They expect a seamless blend of these experiences, where dining complements shopping and vice versa. Retailers embedding foodservice into their strategy recognize that customers now linger longer, spend more and leave with a stronger emotional connection to their brand. The data supports this shift, showing measurable gains in traffic, basket size and loyalty where foodservice integration is thoughtfully executed.

Continuous evolution

In grocery and other channels, retail foodservice operations must continually evolve to meet changing demands. With rising generations taking hold, global uncertainty and increased digitalization, it's becoming even more crucial for these operations to modernize and stay ahead of the curve. The retail foodservice industry faces challenges around changing customer preferences and purchase patterns, supply chain issues and technology. Customers crave healthier options, global flavors and convenient, ready-to-eat meal options, and grocery and convenience stores must strike the right balance between price and quality to meet consumer expectations in the age of value shopping.

READ MORE HERE

SCHOOL NUTRITION IS A PRODUCE INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITY

THEPRODUCENEWS.COM

MAY 9, 2025

Schools across America serve over 30 million lunches daily, providing up to 50 percent of students' daily calories — a substantial nutritional touchpoint in an era where childhood obesity affects approximately 20 percent of children aged 6-19. The evidence for produce impact is compelling. Schools with strategic produce initiatives have seen 35 percent increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and 40 percent reduced waste through innovative presentation. The USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program has significantly boosted produce consumption, while Harvest of the Month initiatives have increased consumption by 27 percent while creating stable markets for regional farmers. So how can we maximize this potential?

Three strategic actions stand out:

Reimagine Product Development and Presentation

Our industry can revolutionize how produce is prepared, packaged and presented in schools by developing solutions that address unique cafeteria challenges. Ready-to-serve, pre-cut options in portion-controlled containers maintain freshness while minimizing waste. Culturally diverse recipe solutions can make fruits and vegetables more appealing to young consumers, while strategic pairing increases consumption of both.

Build Integrated School-Industry Educational Partnerships

Successful consumption requires more than availability. Leading suppliers are developing nutrition education materials that align with academic standards while promoting produce consumption. These include bite-sized learning opportunities accompanying fresh offerings, teacher training programs and resources for families to extend healthy eating beyond school walls.

Pioneer Innovative Distribution and Procurement Solutions

Supply chain challenges remain the greatest barrier to fresh produce in schools. Regional distribution hubs specifically designed for school needs are emerging nationwide. Collaborative purchasing models enable smaller schools to access preferred pricing, while technology platforms connect schools directly with suppliers to reduce waste and ensure fresher products.

Through these targeted actions, the produce industry can transform school nutrition while developing loyal lifelong consumers and expanding market share in this significant sector

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

EVER WONDER HOW FARM-FRESH PRODUCE GETS TO YOUR TABLE? 🍅🚚 TAKE A PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES AT OUR PACKING FACILITY! #FARMTOTABLE