

JANUARY 2, 2026

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# ON THE HORIZON

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industry updates

# CROP & MARKET

INDUSTRY INFO







# MARKET UPDATES

## ROMA TOMATOES

Florida roma tomato supplies are currently limited. Adverse weather about three weeks ago negatively affected fruit set on current harvests, and cool temperatures this week have further slowed maturity and reduced sizing. In addition, some Florida growers have finished their harvests for the season or have lighter acreage planted for this time of year, contributing to the overall tight supply situation. Weather is expected to warm over the next few days, which should benefit the crop and begin to show improvements in volume and sizing by late next week. Lipman is currently harvesting crown and second-picks in both Naples and Labelle; Labelle is expected to finish over the next few weeks, after which production from the Naples area will carry the program through the winter months. At this time, Mexico is also in a relatively light production mode. Central/East Mexico has shifted into their lighter winter production phase, while Baja is in the final two to three weeks of its season. West Mexico has recently started its roma programs on a light basis, with volumes anticipated to increase over the next few weeks as growers advance further into their fields. Overall quality has been good from both Florida and Mexico, although there have been some reports of puffiness in Mexican fruit.

## ORGANIC ROMA TOMATOES

Organic roma tomato availability is currently limited, but supplies are expected to improve over the next 7–10 days as new fields come into production and weather conditions become more favorable. Quality remains somewhat challenged at the moment, with some soft fruit and condition issues being reported, though these concerns should ease as newer crops start and a higher percentage of the volume shifts to fresher picks.

## ROUND TOMATOES

Florida round tomato supplies are also lighter this week, primarily due to prior and ongoing cool weather that has slowed maturity and impacted sizing. Current harvests include a high percentage of second picks, resulting in smaller fruit overall. Lipman is still harvesting second picks in Labelle but is expected to finish there next week, shifting the focus of production to the Naples farms for the balance of the season. Quality has been good; however, grading is being monitored closely to identify and manage any potential weather-related issues. With warmer temperatures forecast, crops are expected to respond positively, and stronger harvest volumes are anticipated within the next 7–10 days. In Mexico, West Mexico's round tomato production is now underway and should gradually increase as we move further into January. As with romas, Baja's season is winding down, and Central Mexico has transitioned into its lighter winter production mode. Current Mexican supplies are more plentiful in 4x5 and 5x5 sizes, and overall quality has been mostly good.

## GRAPE TOMATOES

Florida grape tomato volumes are currently lighter overall, driven by recent cool weather and some growers stepping out of production for this point in the season. Lipman's Labelle grape tomato crops have finished, and all production is now coming from the Naples area. Despite the weather-related challenges, quality has remained good, with fruit generally meeting expectations. In Mexico, grape tomato availability is strong, supported primarily by fully active Culiacan production. Additional volumes are coming from Baja and Central Mexico, though these regions are more limited as Baja winds down its season and Central Mexico transitions into its lighter winter production mode.

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## MINI CUCUMBERS

Mini cucumber supplies have tightened this week due to short daylight hours and some growers being between crop cycles. Despite the lighter availability, quality remains acceptable, with fruit generally meeting market standards. Volumes are expected to improve over the next 2–3 weeks as new plantings come into production and daylight conditions gradually become more favorable.

## GREEN BEANS

Holiday shipping and transportation challenges have impacted green bean availability and led to some age-related quality issues on Eastern product in the past week or so. Beans are currently available out of Immokalee, Homestead, and the Lake region, though there is slightly less acreage in production for the post-holiday period. Quality is good when the beans are fresh and moved promptly. In the West, steady volumes are coming out of Sinaloa with generally good quality, although some lots have shown holiday-related transit stress. With the holiday period now behind us, both supply and quality are expected to be steady and more consistent going forward.

## CHILE PEPPERS

Eastern chili pepper supplies are transitioning into the winter production phase. Plant City is nearly finished, leaving South Florida to provide Eastern volume going forward. Overall availability has been sufficient, but growers are now into some older plantings, which is expected to lighten volumes due to quality concerns. Cubanelles and jalapeños are currently the snuggest items in the East. In the West, supplies are stronger, with good availability on jalapeños, serranos, and Anaheims. Poblanos and tomatillos are on the lighter side and are experiencing some quality issues, though supplies on both are expected to improve over the next two weeks as newer fields come into better production.

## CUCUMBERS

With Sinaloa's new crops ramping up, cucumber supplies out of Mexico are solid, with good overall quality and condition as long as product is kept fresh and moving. Holiday-related transportation and labor challenges created a few short-term issues, but these are expected to level out in the coming week. Eastern supply remains limited, with only very light local volume in Florida and no production yet out of Honduras, keeping the East more dependent on Western/Mexican product in the near term.

## YELLOW AND ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Florida squash supplies are at moderate levels as some new fields came online right around the holiday. Plant City is finishing up, leaving Immokalee and Homestead to carry production through the remainder of the winter season. Quality has been good on both yellow and zucchini squash, particularly from the newer plantings. In the West, availability is strong with Sinaloa's crops in full production. Overall quality has been good, though there is some quality-challenged fruit in the marketplace being offered at discounted prices.

## ORGANIC VEGETABLES

**YELLOW AND ZUCCHINI-** Organic yellow and zucchini squash supplies are plentiful in Sinaloa this week. Quality on organic zucchini is good, provided product is kept fresh and moved promptly, while organic yellow squash is averaging out as fair: color is strong, but some lots are showing firmness-related condition issues. **GREEN BELL PEPPERS-**Organic green bell pepper supplies are on the lighter side this week but are expected to rebound soon, as multiple growers are now in production. Sizing and overall quality have been good, with a full range of counts available; however, there is a higher proportion of choice-grade product in the mix. As volumes increase over the coming days, availability should improve and the grade distribution is likely to balance out. **CUCUMBERS-** Sinaloa is providing good volumes of organic slicer cucumbers this week. Overall quality has been strong, with fruit generally sizing and coloring well, though some shippers are reporting occasional scarring and shriveled ends. Careful selection and grading are recommended to avoid these isolated condition issues and maintain consistent pack quality.

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TRENDS INCLUDE MORE FRESH PRODUCE

[THEPACKER.COM](https://thePACKER.com)

DECEMBER 30, 2025



Well before the new year officially rings in, consumers begin turning to Google to look for ways to reset their eating habits, leading to searches related to healthier diets, gut health and high fiber foods. Rather than limitations and restrictive eating, consumers are seeking ways to add to their health and wellness, whether through adding more plants or consuming more fiber. Google Trends data shows interest building through December and spiking in January, indicating naturally fiber-filled produce as a connection to the resolution season. Data over the past five years shows a reliable spike every January for topics tied to healthier eating. Terms such as “plant-based recipes,” “gut health diet” and “Veganuary” all rise coming out of the holidays. Still, it’s “high fiber foods” that consistently earns the strongest interest.

The January produce rush used to be defined by restriction. Whether it was a rigid juice cleanse or the annual surge of “Veganuary,” the consumer goal was traditionally about what shoppers were taking off their plates. But as we head into the 2026 resolution season, Google search data reveals a fundamental shift. Consumers aren’t looking to cut back; they are looking to “max out.” According to recent Google Trends data, search interest in “High Fiber Foods” has reached a five-year high, consistently outperforming traditional seasonal keywords like “Veganuary” and “Plant-Based Recipes.” This shift is being driven by a new, addition-based wellness narrative that retailers can capitalize on directly in the produce aisle.

While packaged foods still dominate some diet trends, fiber-forward searches point directly to the produce department. The uptick aligns with broader interest in:

- Gut health — prebiotics such as onions and garlic, fermented produce and plant diversity.
- Plant-based cooking — recipes that emphasize vegetables, legumes and whole grains.
- Simple swaps — adding fresh fruit, vegetables and salads to everyday meals.

Google Trends shows that these interests move in parallel, especially in the first four to six weeks of the year — a window where retailers, dietitians and brands have a strong opportunity to connect education and merchandising. Consumers are becoming more label- and benefit-aware, and produce plays an important role.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## WHAT THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY CAN EXPECT IN 2026

[NRN.COM](https://www.nrn.com)

DECEMBER 22, 2025

It's no secret that 2025 didn't necessarily go as planned for the restaurant industry. Predictions in the early part of the year were buoyant following a somewhat muted 2024. Like most firms, higher projections were based on a more stable environment, but those predictions never came to pass. In fact, uncertainty worsened. Consumer sentiment has now plummeted to near-historic lows.

So dizzying has this year's uncertainty been that forecasts were lowered by the start of the second quarter. Not only downgrading expectations for the year, but it also moved analysts into a scenario-based model to derive a forecast — which is a rare move. As such, nominal sales growth has been downgraded to 4.3% for limited-service restaurants and 2.1% for full-service restaurants. Real growth, however, is projected to be flat.

That said, 2026 is expected to improve and stabilize. Real growth improvement is expected to fall between 1.2% and 2.1%. Consumer expectations are expected to improve in 2026 following significant drops in 2025. While restaurant companies walk the fine line of providing value and protecting margins, more are doing so through their loyalty programs. These programs allow operators to target promotions while collecting consumer data. They also drive frequency, which has become a bigger play as traffic remains negative across much of the industry. There will also be a “surge” in self-service models, offering faster ordering, more convenience, and more control for guests.

Another silver lining? All those technology investments from the past several years will start to realize even greater returns, including more efficiency and waste reduction. Of course, nobody has a reliable crystal ball, but plenty of industry insiders have educated guesses.



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# UPCOMING EVENTS:

**JAN 12-13**

**EAST COAST PRODUCE EXPO**

**JW MARRIOTT**

**TURNBERRY RESORT AND SPA**

**AVENTURA FLORIDA**

**COME VISIT US AT BOOTH 605!**

**<https://events.farmjournal.com/east-coast-produce-expo-2026/8146234/>**

**FEB 26 - MAR 1**

**SEPC SOUTHERN EXPOSURE**

**ORLANDO WORLD CENTER**

**ORLANDO FLORIDA**

**COME VISIT US AT BOOTH 638!**

**<https://seproducecouncil.com/event/southern-exposure/>**



## TOMATO SNAPSHOT

CHEERS TO A FRESH  
START! 🍷 WISHING  
YOU A HEALTHY,  
FLAVORFUL YEAR  
AHEAD FROM ALL OF  
US AT LIPMAN.

