

FEBRUARY 20, 2026

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ON THE HORIZON

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industry updates

**CROP &
MARKET**
INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROUND TOMATOES

Round tomato supplies are following a similar pattern to romas, with lighter production reported in both the East and West, though rounds are faring slightly better in terms of overall available volume. In Florida, Lipman is currently harvesting in Naples, where the recent cold weather has led to reduced yields and a higher grade-out percentage as some fruit fails to meet specifications. Volume is expected to be lighter next week with the trend continuing for several weeks. Estero is anticipated to come online in 14-21 days, assuming cooperative weather. These crops have also been impacted by the weather and are likely to offer yields and volumes that are lighter than usual. In the West, Mexico is also contending with the lingering effects of prior adverse weather, resulting in yields that are considerably below expectations and quality that ranges from fair to good. Given these factors, round tomato supplies are expected to remain on the lighter side for at least the next two weeks, and the industry should be prepared for some variability in quality and continued firmness in the market.

ENGLISH CUCUMBER

English cucumber supplies remain snug this week, reflecting the combined impact of prior weather and market conditions. When markets were extremely depressed, several growers in Mexico elected to pull out crops early to limit financial losses, effectively reducing available acreage ahead of schedule. A modest uptick in supply is possible over the next two weeks, but meaningful relief is not expected until Canadian production ramps up in roughly 3-5 weeks. At that point, supplies should begin to return to more typical levels, offering improved consistency and availability for most regions.

ROMA TOMATOES

Tomato supplies, particularly romas, are tightening rapidly as Florida moves into fields that were more heavily impacted by the recent frost/freeze event. The cold weather caused significant bloom drop, leading to lower yields, smaller fruit size, and some quality issues, all of which are further reducing available volumes. Lipman is expected to transition to Estero in 3-4 weeks; however, those crops were also affected by adverse weather, so overall Florida roma volumes are projected to remain constrained until at least May. On the western side of the deal, supplies are also lighter than usual. West Mexico has not seen the strong production typically expected at this time of year, largely due to a series of earlier weather events that reduced yields and created ongoing quality challenges. As a result, industry participants should plan for continued tight roma supplies and elevated quality variability over the next several weeks.

MINI CUCUMBER

Mini cucumber supplies continue to be extremely short with very limited to no availability. New crops in West Mexico have been delayed by earlier weather challenges but are expected to come online in the next 2 weeks, weather willing. Canadian production is also slated to start in mid-March and will help bring better balance and stability to overall supply. In the meantime, current quality is only fair at best, with heavy culls and packouts running at 50% or less in many lots. Plan for continued tight supplies and variable quality in the near term but we can look forward to improved volume and quality as the new crops begin harvesting over the next few weeks.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Grape tomato supplies are holding up reasonably well, though weather impacts are beginning to show. In Florida, multiple plantings in harvest have led to slightly stronger volumes this week, despite weather having spread harvest windows out more than usual. Quality on final packs has been good overall, but cold damage in the fields is resulting in noticeable grade-outs and some reduction in usable yield. Bloom drop has been observed in upcoming plantings, so production is expected to trend downward in the near term. Lipman is currently harvesting in Naples and will begin in a very light way in Estero over the weekend. If weather cooperates, a modest bump in volume is anticipated in early March. In Mexico, grape tomato production is running at moderate levels, with supplies relatively steady. Quality ranges from fair to good as the impacts of prior weather events are now starting to appear in the crop. Overall, expect manageable but somewhat tighter supplies ahead, along with some ongoing quality variability.

GREEN BEANS

Green bean volumes are at critical levels in both the East and West. In Florida, Homestead is currently the only producing area, and volumes there are very limited due to damage from the prior cold weather event. This tight supply situation is expected to persist until new crops come online in the Immokalee area over the next 3–4 weeks. Looking to Mexico, supplies are also very low, and overall quality is weak, in part due to disease pressure in the fields. While the Sinaloa season typically runs through May, ongoing disease issues could bring the crop to an earlier-than-normal finish, further constraining availability in the weeks ahead.

BELL PEPPERS

Florida's bell pepper supplies are feeling the effects of the recent freeze event in a more pronounced way this week. Overall availability is tightening, particularly on larger sizes, as growers have now moved through most of the fields that were actively in production during the weather event. Quality issues are also limiting usable volume, with a higher percentage of grade-outs due to sun and freeze damage. As a result, the South Florida season may conclude slightly earlier than originally expected, and supplies are projected to remain constrained over the next 30 days. In the West, Mexican supplies are also light, and quality is fair, with some bruising, stem decay, and other rain-related defects being reported. Sinaloa remains the primary growing area for bell peppers in Mexico at this time, and with the bulk of production there experiencing similar conditions, overall supply is expected to remain at current reduced levels until harvests transition to California.

ZUCCHINI & YELLOW SQUASH

Florida's squash production remains very limited following the recent cold weather event. Homestead is once again the primary producing area, but supplies are light as plants have not fully recovered from the cold. There is slightly more zucchini available than yellow squash, though both remain in very tight supply. Overall quality is only fair, consistent with typical conditions from the windy Homestead area. It appears to be another 2–3 weeks before new crops begin in both Homestead and the Immokalee area, at which point supplies should start migrating back toward more normal levels. In Mexico, volume is also light as current Sinaloa crops are dealing with disease pressure. Some yellow squash is expected out of Sonora as early as next week, with zucchini to follow shortly thereafter, which should help improve both volume and overall quality. Zucchini quality is currently somewhat better than yellow squash, while available yellow squash continues to show more noticeable quality compromises.

CUCUMBERS

Eastern cucumber supplies are currently being sourced primarily from Honduras, where volumes remain light and overall quality and condition are being challenged by longer transportation times. Looking ahead, spring plantings in Florida are expected to begin supplying the Eastern deal in a light way by mid-March. Some covered plantings were able to withstand the recent weather event, while other fields required replanting, which will delay their start dates. As a result, initial Eastern volume from Florida should begin in mid-March, with supplies gradually building as we move into April. In the West, supplies are holding at moderate levels with mostly good quality being reported. A somewhat lighter supply is anticipated next week as some growers work through a brief semi-gap, but volumes are expected to recover shortly thereafter.

ORGANIC BELL PEPPERS

With a few growers experiencing a mini flush, availability of organic colored bell peppers has been stronger this week. However, this increase is expected to be short-lived; in approximately two weeks, supplies are anticipated to tighten again as the flush passes, and overall availability will likely remain snug until Canadian production starts up in mid to late March. Overall quality is acceptable, but there are some greening concerns, with a portion of the fruit not fully coloring out as desired, which may limit usage.

LIPMAN FAMILY FARMS HIGHLIGHTS FRESH-CUT INNOVATION AT SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

BLUEBOOKSERVICES.COM

February 19, 2026



Lipman Family Farms will be in booth 638 at Southern Exposure, the annual Southeast Produce Council (SEPC) conference and trade show, February 26-March 1 at Orlando World Center.

Lipman is excited to showcase its vertical integration in its home state. With the winter crop currently coming out of their Florida farms, plus a growing fresh-cut lineup that scales nationwide, the company is sharing what is possible when innovation is a family tradition that spans more than 75 years.

Visitors will discover a variety of Lipman solutions that are designed for the challenges of produce buyers, merchandisers and foodservice operators. A highlight is Lipman's ready-to-use fresh-cut line that offers year-round, freshly prepped produce, including sliced or diced staples like tomatoes, onions and peppers, along with value-add fajita mix and pico de gallo. Every item is freshly picked, freshly cut, and then packaged for maximum shelf life and food safety.

"We're excited about the possibilities that our fresh-cut products bring to our customers," said Cheryl Hoefs, SVP of Sales & Marketing at Lipman Family Farms. "From our coast-to-coast consistency to packaging innovation, our fresh-cut line is a real showcase for the advanced capabilities we bring to the table."

Lipman fresh-cut produce reduces knife and slicer use, ensures consistency and limits handling during prep, which lowers cross-contamination risk. Lipman does the work in state-of-the-art, temperature-controlled facilities with continuous monitoring and extensive sanitation and quality measures to ensure uniform product across locations and 100% usable yield per pound.

Lipman staff are onsite to share how Lipman's national reach and end-to-end operations deliver just-in-time produce with appetizing reliability. Lipman R&D, breeding programs, custom packs and tailored products, along with logistics and distribution, provide a unique advantage that enhances a buyer's own reputation for quality.

"We're growers at heart," said Hoefs, "but our business extends far beyond farming. With our vertically integrated business, nobody is better equipped to deliver in-season freshness at any time of the year. We're excited for Southern Exposure to experience over 75 years of Lipman innovation."

Learn how Lipman can drive sales and simplify operations for your business. Make booth 638 a must-see at SEPC Southern Exposure.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

TRENDSPOTTING: GROCERY SHOPPING IMPACTED BY FINANCIAL INSECURITIES

[THEPRODUCENEWS.COM](https://www.theproducenews.com)

February 20, 2026

It is becoming more and more difficult for far too many to adequately meet basic necessities — especially when it comes to food. For the first time mass-channel retailers have equaled traditional supermarkets at 79 percent penetration, marking a fundamental shift in American shopping behavior driven by persistent affordability pressures.

Mass-channel penetration has increased five percentage points, representing a shift of millions of consumers changing shopping patterns. Dollar stores have surged to 42 percent penetration, overtaking club stores for the first time since August 2023.

The surge in penetration for mass retailers and dollar stores reflects deepening financial pressure across American households. The report states that 70 percent of working-age Americans (ages 18–54) have difficulty covering an unexpected \$400 expense, with the strain most acute among lower-income households (71 percent for those earning under \$50,000) and families with children (67 percent).

Even middle- and upper-income Americans struggle as 48 percent of those earning \$50,000–\$100,000 and 36 percent earning over \$100,000 report financial insecurity. Only seniors show relative stability, with 30 percent of Americans over 65 facing difficulty covering emergency expenses.

U.S. households are realigning where they shop based on affordability. What makes this different from the 2023 inflation spike is that consumer concern persists even as actual inflation moderates. The consumer is just not feeling it. Where they shop, how they use coupons, even how they adopt AI — everything aligns to saving money. When financial insecurity becomes this entrenched, grocery affordability becomes paramount and shopping behavior doesn't just snap back.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS:



CLICK HERE
TO SIGN UP
FOR LIPMAN'S
5K RUN FOR
BACKPACKS
ON MARCH
21ST!

FEB 26 - MAR 1

SEPC SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

ORLANDO WORLD CENTER

ORLANDO FLORIDA

COME VISIT US AT BOOTH 638!

<https://seproduceouncil.com/event/southern-exposure/>

MAY 27 - MAY 29

WEST COAST PRODUCE EXPO

JW MARRIOTT DESERT SPRINGS RESORT

PALM DESERT, CA

COME VISIT US AT BOOTH 405!

<https://events.farmjournal.com/west-coast-produce-expo-2026>



TOMATO SNAPSHOT

NO MATTER WHAT TIME OF
YEAR IT IS, LIPMAN
GREENHOUSES KEEP THE
RIPE ROUND TOMATOES
COMING. 🍅 WE CAN
CONTROL THE CLIMATE,
PROTECT PLANTS AND
BRING IN-SEASON FRESH
FLAVOR EVERYWHERE, AT
ANY TIME. 🌱

