

APRIL 17, 2026

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industry updates

CROP & MARKET

INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

TOMATOES

Supply remains tight across all categories, driven by prior weather disruptions in Florida and transitional gaps in Mexico. Quality continues to be inconsistent, with sizing and packouts limiting usable volume. While some improvement is expected later this month, availability will remain constrained in the near term, especially on rounds and romas.

BELL PEPPERS

Green and colored bell peppers are extremely limited, with quality challenges further reducing supply. The market is in a transition period, and relief is not expected until western desert regions begin contributing volume. Expect continued volatility and substitution needs.

CUCUMBERS

Cucumber supply is adequate but tightening, particularly on select grades and certain pack sizes. Quality is generally fair, but availability may fluctuate as regions shift.

ZUCCHINI & YELLOW SQUASH

Squash markets have firmed up quickly, with supply tightening over the past week. Production is still available, but demand is outpacing supply, leading to upward pressure and potential gaps.

EGGPLANT

Eggplant availability is moderate but inconsistent, with quality varying by region. Supply is expected to remain uneven in the short term.

CHILI PEPPERS

Chili pepper supply is mixed depending on variety, with some items readily available while others are tight due to regional transitions. Expect inconsistency across sizing and quality.

GREEN BEANS

Green bean supply is limited, with gaps in production impacting availability. Markets remain elevated with no immediate relief expected.

HARD SQUASH

Hard squash items are generally available, though certain varieties are seeing lighter supply and quality variability. Overall, this category remains more stable than others.

HOTHOUSE ITEMS

Hothouse items are steady but not immune to pressure, with certain SKUs experiencing tightness due to increased demand. Supply is generally more reliable than field-grown items but still subject to fluctuations.

ORGANIC ITEMS

Organic supply continues to lag conventional, with notable tightness across tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers. Availability is inconsistent, and substitutions may be required.

PRODUCE IS TRANSFORMING THE QSR MENU

[PRODUCEBUSINESS.COM](https://www.producebusiness.com)

APRIL 10, 2026



To most North American consumers, the concept of Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) within the foodservice segment signifies burgers, chicken or other hot protein foods bought at drive-throughs or ordered online. For an increasing number of people, however, this concept increasingly incorporates healthy-eating options, including those featuring fresh fruits and vegetables.

For retailers and producers alike, this phenomenon represents an opportunity to offer an alternative to ultra-processed products that are now associated with a growing number of health concerns. There are limitless possibilities to introduce new varieties of familiar produce to the QSR segment, spotlighting new colors, flavors and textures.

However, given mounting concern surrounding ultra-processed foods, seed oils, and unfamiliar ingredients, what consumers seek most of all right now are options they can trust. At the end of the day, consumers just want food they can feel good about and trust, which is obviously an opportunity for produce. These are simple ingredients that consumers feel good about eating.

There is a real opportunity for produce companies to work with QSRs to replace non-fresh ingredients and dishes with a trusted, fresh option. By carrying that messaging through to product launch, showcasing videos of farmers, and chefs preparing fresh fruits and vegetables, this option can really resonate with consumers.

To place more emphasis on ingredients, showcase any prep work done in an open kitchen environment, highlight fresh ingredients prominently, and use them in signage and marketing. Such practices will improve customer trust in what is going into the food.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

CONSUMERS WANT A RETURN ON THEIR FRESH PRODUCE INVESTMENT

THEPRODUCENEWS.COM

APRIL 17, 2026



Over the years numerous reports on fresh fruit and vegetable consumption show respondents desire to eat more fresh fruits and veggies. Want and do, of course, are two totally different animals. Some of the biggest deterrents usually include concerns over “getting a bad piece of fruit and not eating it.” When you buy potato chips or pretzels you know what you are getting.

This leads into another concern — cost. Often consumers are hesitant to buy fresh produce because of the cost associated and return on investment — i.e. they are not going to eat what they buy.

That concern may just be getting bigger for those not raking in the big bucks — it’s not even the big bucks, even those bring in moderate bucks are tightening their purse strings.

One study examines how a widening gap in consumer behavior is reshaping retail demand. The findings, drawn from more than 10 billion transactions and surveys of 3,500-plus consumers, reveal that high- and low-income consumers are making fundamentally different decisions about where and how much to spend.

Among the key findings:

- Consumer behavior splits sharply at \$75,000. Above that household income threshold, consumers report increased spending and growing confidence in their financial outlook. Below it, consumers are pulling back — and the gap shows no sign of closing.
- Lower-income consumers are cutting essentials, not just discretionary spending. Groceries and fuel — categories most Americans consider non-negotiable — are among the areas where lower-income consumers report reducing trips and spending less.
- Mass promotions risk missing both groups. Blanket offers to higher-income consumers give away margin on transactions that would have happened anyway. Insufficient offers to lower-income consumers mean fewer trips. The same strategy can underperform with both populations simultaneously.

Specific to grocery, between 2024 and 2025 household incomes under the \$75,000 mark are spending 14 percent less, while those above are spending 3 percent more. Getting back to the chips versus produce dilemma, the report states that lower-income household look to “minimize risk” in making purchases as they ask, “Can I afford this” while hunting lowest prices and best deals when they shop.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

APRIL 27 - 29

IFPA RETAIL CONFERENCE

**SHERATON GRAND AT WILDHORSE PASS
PHOENIX, AZ**

COME VISIT US AT TABLE 9!

**[https://www.freshproduce.com/events/
the-retail-conference/](https://www.freshproduce.com/events/the-retail-conference/)**

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](https://events.farmjournal.com/west-coast-produce-expo-2026)**



TOMATO SNAPSHOT

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OF OUR FIELD TOMATO
SEEDS ARE DEVELOPED IN-
HOUSE? THAT INCLUDES
OUR EXCLUSIVE CRIMSON
VARIETY, WHICH WAS
CREATED FOR REDDER
COLOR, BETTER FLAVOR,
AND DISEASE RESISTANCE.**

