



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Florida's round tomato supply is a little stronger this week as more growers get started in the Ruskin/ Palmetto area. Sizing is on the larger side as growing conditions have been favorable and most are in crown picks. Lipman is one of the few growers still rolling in the southern part of the state and we'll continue with crown picks in Estero into the first part of next week. Although one grower has reported a little wind scar in early Ruskin/ Palmetto crops, overall quality from all growers/areas is nice. Roma availability is steady but light as new growers gradually come online. Grape tomato farms have worked their way through a flush and are back down to normal levels. There's still plenty of nice-quality fruit to meet demand, mostly from the Palmetto/Ruskin growing zone.

With Mainland Mexico's round tomato crops nearing the end of the season, volume and sizing will decline over the next few weeks until they finish sometime in early May. Baja is expected to begin new crops in the next 7-10 days and the CA desert will crank up in mid-May, keeping a mostly steady stream of round supply in the West. Romas are in good shape as well, with West Mexico's new crops rolling and Baja scheduled to start next week. Grape tomatoes are the wild card this week, as quality and volumes are declining on current crops.

Bell Peppers: With demand on the light side, Florida's pepper supply is holding its own for the East this week. Production has increased a bit as the weather has been excellent. Plant City has gotten rolling and older fields in the southern part of the state are still harvesting. Supply should be fairly consistent for the next week or two, but southern farms expect to wrap up by May 1. Georgia is on tap to begin around May 15, so hopefully Plant City can keep the ball rolling until then. Quality has been pretty good, although there have been weather effects on some lots recently. The Western pepper scene

is a tale of two crops- older fields in the short rows in Mexico and fresh, new crops from the Coachella, CA area. Mexico's plants are getting tired and we're seeing thinner walls, some shrivel and the occasional turner. On the other hand, California's fruit is beginning to size up and has strong walls and excellent color.

Cucumbers: Cucumber volume out of Mainland Mexico is still increasing and supply is plentiful. Some growers have been struggling with quality, but it seems to be getting better. Baja farms are also in the mix with good quality and more volume on the way. With the east coast, west coast and Plant City in production, there are also plenty of cucumbers in Florida! Overall quality has been good. We've seen light scarring from some growers, but it's not been a real issue yet. There are a few late crops planted in South Florida that will harvest during the first two weeks of May, but most southern farms will be wrapping up by then.

Summer Squash: Florida's yellow squash supply is light, as most of the southern crops are finished, leaving Plant City as the primary sourcing area this week. Scarring and scuffing are definitely an issue and it's been difficult to get product that meets retail specs. Look for some possible relief from Georgia as they get up and running with first fruit of the season over the weekend. Expect this new volume to be light for a week or so, then kick in after that. On the other hand, zucchini availability is solid. Quality is better than yellow, but is best described as average. The story is similar in Mexico with much better volumes and quality on zucchini than yellow. Barring weather issues, the Sonora area should have a fairly steady stream of supply for the next few weeks, at least on zucchini.

Green Beans: There have been several Florida areas harvesting

beans for the past few weeks (South FL, Lake area, Plant City area) and supply has been over the top. Some growers, particularly in the southern areas, harvested what they had sold, then plowed under remaining fields due to low market prices. We should see volume drop a bit next week as the south finishes up. Although there seems to be plenty of product in the ground now, depressed market prices could throw a wrench in supply. The West also has multiple areas in both Mexico and California in production and expects good supply for the immediate future. Quality is best from newer fields and areas.

Eggplant: Florida's eggplant numbers are steady but lighter than expected, as yields seem to be down this season. Quality is pretty solid, but there have been some scarring concerns reported. Mexico farms are steady as she goes on eggs with plenty of supply to meet holiday demand.

Chili Peppers: With an active national market and the holiday, Mexico's chili pepper crossings look to be lighter going into the weekend. Quality has been mostly good up to this point, but will likely begin to decline as heat takes a toll on the older plants in production. In the East, Plant City is starting to pick up steam with more volume and varieties available this week. Tomatillos are still 2-3 weeks away, but are coming. Quality is nice on this new-crop fruit.

Hard Squash: Western acorn and spaghetti squashes are available at promotional prices and volumes. Butternut... not so much. The Spring crop has been slow to come on keeping them in short supply, especially on larger sizes. Quality is varied. On spaghetti we are seeing more and more scarring, and pale color. Butternuts have been squatty and show mechanical damage while acorns have some ground lay. We'll see more product next week, hopefully with better quality.

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KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

Acosta Report Anticipates Influence of Multicultural Shoppers

By: Renee Sexton, www.theshelbyreport.com, April 11, 2019

Recent data from Acosta anticipates increasing influence of multicultural shoppers on the grocery industry. Research released this week in the first-ever Multicultural The Why? The Behind The Buy from Acosta provides insight into the preferences of U.S. Hispanic, African American and Asian American shoppers.

“The growing multicultural population will drastically impact the grocery industry, and we have already noticed key differences between shopper groups,” said John Clevenger, SVP and managing director of Acosta Strategic Advisors. “For example, multicultural shoppers recognize the link between food and their health and are significantly more likely to buy natural and organic foods even though they are more expensive. Understanding these unique values and preferences is vital for manufacturers and retailers to win with this emerging consumer group.”

Acosta’s “Multicultural The Why? Behind The Buy” includes a comprehensive view of the shopping preferences of these distinct shopper groups including:

Grocery shopping is an enjoyable routine

- More multicultural shoppers enjoy grocery shopping. Seventy-two percent of African American shoppers, 65 percent of U.S. Hispanic shoppers and 61 percent of Asian American shoppers reported this versus 56 percent of White/Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) shoppers.
- Shopping with other people is more common among multicultural groups. Seventy-two percent of Asian American shoppers, 67 percent of U.S. Hispanic shoppers and 63 percent of African American shoppers reported shopping with others during their routine, regular grocery trips versus 55 percent of White/Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) shoppers.
- Multicultural shoppers purchase groceries across more channels than total U.S. shoppers. Twenty-three percent of U.S. Hispanic shoppers reported shopping in a Hispanic/Ethnic grocery store in the past six months versus three percent of total U.S. shoppers.

Multicultural shoppers are engaged with brands

- Forty-nine percent of U.S. Hispanic shoppers and 46 percent of Asian American shoppers agreed that they buy grocery brands that are authentic to their ethnic heritage.
- Sixty-five percent of African American shoppers and 59 percent of U.S. Hispanic shoppers agreed that they are passionate about their favorite grocery brands.
- Compared to total U.S. shoppers, more multicultural shoppers agreed that they buy brands that are socially responsible.

Convenient meal solutions are important

- More multicultural shoppers brought grocery prepared foods home in the past thirty days. Seventy-six percent of U.S. Hispanic shoppers reported doing this in the past month versus 59 percent of White/Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) shoppers.
- Seventy-six percent of Asian American shoppers reported ordering from a restaurant for pick-up/carry-out in the past 30 days versus 53 percent of White/Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) shoppers.

Multicultural Shoppers Comfortable with Grocery Digital

- Forty-four percent of U.S. Hispanic shoppers reported reading a digital grocery flyer versus 35 percent of total U.S. shoppers.
- Thirty-eight percent of African American shoppers reported using a search engine to find recipes online versus 28 percent of total U.S. shoppers.
- Thirty-seven percent of Asian American shoppers reported using a shopping list on their mobile device versus 26 percent of total U.S. shoppers.

Acosta’s Multicultural The Why? Behind the Buy was compiled using its The Why? Behind the Buy U.S. & Hispanic Shopper Surveys, Winter 2017-2018, with additional multicultural population facts sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau and blackdemographics.com.

Key multicultural segments driving U.S. growth



U.S. Hispanic
57.5M

The population is projected to nearly double by 2060



African American
47.4M

More than half of the population is located in the southern U.S.



Asian American
18.3M

Strong economic clout with higher median household income and more college-educated

TRANSPORTATION FACTS



*The national diesel average price continues to climb, moving from \$3.09 to \$3.12 per gallon this week.

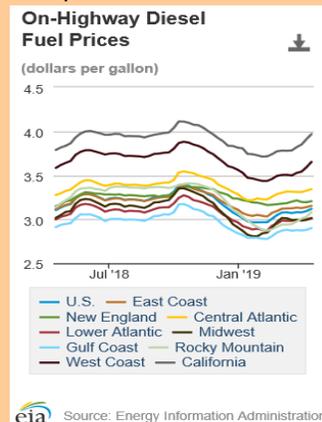
* The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.01 higher than the same time last year.

* Prices rose from \$.01 to \$.06 per gallon in all reporting areas with the most notable increase coming from the West Coast (up \$.063).

*California continues to have the highest diesel prices in the country at \$3.97 per gallon while the Gulf Coast is the low-price leader at \$2.90 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price stayed relatively stable this week, moving from \$63.98 to \$63.76 per barrel.

*There’s a shortage of trucks in Central and South Florida this week, but all other shipping areas have adequate levels of transportation available.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**Heidi Salinas- Food Safety & Compliance Manager
Lipman/Huron Produce- Edinburg, TX**



How many years have you been at Huron/Lipman? 3 years

What is your favorite aspect of working for Huron/Lipman? I have been very fortunate to meet and establish relationships with my amazing colleagues here and throughout our different divisions. I also love that we all work as a team to get things done efficiently.

What is your favorite vegetable? Cucumber

What is your favorite food? Mexican Food

Tell us about your family. I have been married to my wonderful husband, Gabriel Salinas, for 4 years and we have 5 fur babies: Dexter (shit zu), Nina (dachshund), Athena (German shepherd), Tank (mastiff mix) and Beretta (GSP). We also adore our 5 nephews and niece and spoil them any chance we get.

Where did you grow up? I was born and raised in McAllen, TX which is located at the southern tip of the state where we experience year- round sunshine and enjoy the 80-degree winters. Luckily, we have South Padre Island beach only 45 minutes away to cool off when needed.

What do you like to do when you aren't working? Playing with our dogs, gardening, bay fishing, attending concerts and theater shows, and spending time with family.

Ideal vacation spot? Spain

Favorite movie of all time? Bridesmaids, because I just find it hilarious.

What are your favorite sports teams? Dallas Cowboys, San Antonio Spurs, Houston Astros

If you could have one superpower, what would it be? My superpower would be to cure the sick.

Do you have any other hidden talents? I know how to play the guitar and French horn.

Do you collect anything? Teapots, because I love hot tea.

PRODUCE BAROMETER

ITEM	QUALITY	PRICING
Bell Pepper	Good	Lower
Cucumber	Good	Steady
Eggplant	Fair to Good	Steady
Green Beans	Good	Steady
Jalapenos	Good	Steady
Onions	Good	Steady
Squash	Fair to Good	Higher
Tomatoes	Good	Steady



APRIL CALENDAR

April All Month

National Grilled Cheese Month

April 21st- 27th

Administrative Professionals Week

April 24th

National Administrative Professionals' Day

April 23rd

National Picnic Day

April 25th

National Zucchini Bread Day

Plant City, FL Weather

Fri Apr 19	Sat Apr 20	Sun Apr 21	Mon Apr 22	Tue Apr 23
84° F	72° F	79° F	83° F	85° F
61° F	57° F	57° F	62° F	65° F
S 25 MPH	W 17 MPH	NNE 5 MPH	NE 8 MPH	E 9 MPH
Precip 90%	Precip 20%			

NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

How Shoppers are Connecting with Retailers Via Social Media

By: Produce Retailer Staff, www.produceretailer.com, April 12, 2019

Relationships start with a connection. How do you build that bond with shoppers? Social media may seem like the obvious answer — after all, not only do shoppers use their digital devices to research items and track prices, but they share thoughts and recipes with friends over these vast networks.

While many consumers use social media in their daily lives, it turns out that delving into their digital devices to find out more about fresh produce is not top-of-mind for most shoppers. In fact, 82% of respondents to Fresh Trends 2019 said they had never interacted with a supermarket on social media. Produce marketers may need to get creative to tap into this less-embraced side of marketing for fresh foods.

Give shoppers a reason to connect

While consumers are often happy to connect to friends and family via social media platforms, they're more hesitant about extending the same degree of welcome to marketers. Only 25% of shoppers said "yes" when asked "Are you 'friends' with or do you 'follow' (or otherwise socially connect to) a supermarket via social media?" in Fresh Trends 2019. And while consumers seem eager for feedback on major life events or everyday happenings on social networks like Facebook and Twitter, 65% of respondents said they would not change their shopping behavior—like trying a new type of fruit/vegetable or recipe—based on recommendations from their social network. (About a third — 35% — said they would make a change based on friends' endorsements.) Interestingly, 42% of shoppers said they did not use social media for grocery shopping purposes. Of those that did use social media, 29% said they used Facebook and 22% said they used YouTube as a tool for supermarket shopping. Those two social media platforms were also the top ones that consumers said were their "favorite" outlets when asked about social media in general.

This hesitancy on the part of consumers to embrace social media for grocery shopping offers huge opportunities for produce marketers, who can encourage consumers to link up with them. More than half of those surveyed (57%) said they would interact with a supermarket via social media regarding fresh produce if they were offered a coupon or product discount. Sixteen percent of buyers said they would link up with their supermarket digitally if it offered recipes, and 13% said they would use social media to find out about an event or promotion at their store.

Marketers can take advantage of promoting products through apps and phone-friendly sites. Of those surveyed in Fresh Trends 2019, 59% of respondents said that they research prices and products like fresh produce using their smartphones. More than a third (36%) said they sat down at a desktop computer to examine prices and learn about fresh produce items, while 19% said they used "other" methods, likely newspaper or TV ads.

Target certain demographic groups

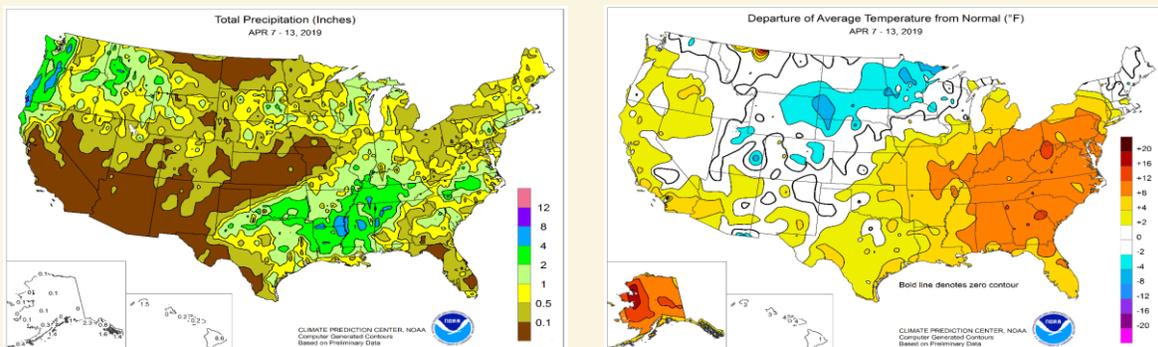
Shoppers in the youngest age group (age 18-39) were among the least likely overall to buy fresh produce, according to Fresh Trends 2019, yet this group is among the most likely to use social media in all aspects of their lives. Marketers can use this to their advantage. Forty percent of shoppers this year said they would subscribe to an app that taught them how to better use/prepare fresh produce. Marketers who offer this element put themselves in a better position to build customer loyalty with digital shoppers.

Of those consumers who said they had interacted with their store, 46% said they had commented on or shared a photo, and 38% said they had commented on or shared a sale or promotion with others. Asking shoppers to send in their own photos or share a sale with their friends and family not only brings the potential for increased sales, but it also spreads your name out among the digital crowds. Thirty-seven percent of respondents to the survey said they had entered a contest held by their supermarket via social media. One-fifth of shoppers said they sought an answer to a question via social media, and 8% said they voiced a complaint.

Whether today's consumers are suffering from information overload and don't want to add one more program to their device, or whether they lack the time to watch and/or learn about preparing fresh produce is unclear. What is clear, though, is that marketers will need to get creative to drive interest in social media connections or offer incentives to social media connections that consumers will find hard to turn down.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Drive Year-Round Traffic with Game-Day Offerings

www.restaurantbusinessonline.com, April 15, 2019

Showing sporting events in a bar or restaurant is among the most economical ways to drive traffic throughout the year. Rather than beckoning customers with costly discounts and drink specials that may or may not earn a return on investment, operators can appeal to a broad range of sports fans with a year-round slate of programming that generates excitement and draws repeat crowds.

With baseball season currently in full swing, operators can bank on fans who love watching games on TV. According to 2018 data from Forbes, Major League Baseball was among the most popular cable programming in almost every major MLB market in 2017. The frequency of baseball games—all 30 teams play a total of 162 games per season—and the excitement of watching them live generates viewership that is often many times higher than other prime time TV shows, the report found. “The average MLB team generates more viewing on its [regional sports network] than the top 10 primetime shows combined in the same market,” the Forbes report stated, citing research from Fox Sports.

Becoming a destination for sports watching throughout the season sets the stage for the excitement of the playoffs, which take place in the fall for baseball but are just getting underway for the National Basketball Association and National Hockey League. Now is a good time to prepare a party atmosphere for the big games leading up to the championships in those sports.

Last year, the NBA Conference Finals games, in which the Cleveland Cavaliers played the Boston Celtics and the Houston Rockets played the Golden State Warriors, drew an average of more than 9 million viewers, up 40% over the preceding year, according to a Forbes magazine report.

Hockey also commands strong viewership, especially for big games. This year’s NHL All-Star Game, for example, posted an impressive 1.29 overnight viewership rating, the third highest for an NHL All-Star Game since 2004, according to NBC Sports.

The playoffs in any sport create opportunities for restaurant and bars that broadcast the games. Operators can host special viewing events, post stat and bracket sheets and decorate the bar and/or dining area with team paraphernalia. Social media is also a great way to promote viewing of these games, as consumers are increasingly checking in via their smartphones for game schedules and score updates. Operators might consider adding schedule updates, scores and game summaries to their own social media feeds to reinforce their connection to the games.

Football, it should be noted, remains Americans’ favorite viewing pastime, according to a 2018 Gallup poll. Of those polled, 37% cited football as their favorite sport to watch, followed by basketball and then baseball. With a regular lineup of Thursday Night Football games throughout the season, in addition to the always-popular Monday Night Football games and the full schedule of games throughout the day on Sundays, customers have more options than ever to watch football at their local restaurant and bar.

Carrying a full lineup of sports throughout the year is an open invitation to consumers who are increasingly interested in sharing the excitement with their friends over good food and drinks and watching the action live.

FRESH
TOMATOES

the best of nature™

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
PACK YOUR BAGS!

April 25-27, 2019
Viva Fresh Expo
JW Marriott
San Antonio, TX
www.vivafreshexpo.com
Come see #TeamLipman at booth #64!

April 30-May 1, 2019
FMI's Day in Washington
The Liaison Capitol Hotel
Washington, D.C.
www.fmi.org

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VALUED CUSTOMERS



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