



**MARKET UPDATE**

**Tomatoes:** South Florida tomato crops are winding down quickly and the bulk of Eastern production is now centered in the Palmetto/Ruskin area. Yields have been excellent, especially on rounds and romas. There are ample volumes of grape tomatoes as well, but numbers are down slightly from the last few weeks. Overall quality is excellent and should continue to be pending weather.

With supply coming from multiple areas in Mexico, round and roma tomatoes are readily available in the West. Both Baja and Eastern Mexico are easing into the thick of things and should see volumes increase over the next few week as more growers and fields come online. However, grape tomato numbers are lighter due to yields and quality concerns.

**Bell Peppers:** South Florida's bell peppers have tightened up due to rain-related quality issues (bruising and stem decay) and normal seasonal decline. Plant City farms also have fruit to offer, but acreage and volumes are light in comparison. With Georgia still a few weeks away, we could see the Eastern pepper situation become a little tricky. Meanwhile, Western markets can choose between Mexico or California product. Mexico's crops are in seasonal decline and we're seeing turning, minor bruising, and shriveling on inbound fruit. New-crop California peppers have nice quality but there are some sizing and shape issues that are typical for the start of their season.

**Cucumbers:** Florida cucumber volumes have improved slightly this week, with product coming from both the central and southern parts of the state. There are still some scarring concerns, but quality has improved as growers have moved into new fields. The West has good volumes available this week. Sonora farms continue to see production increases and Baja is off to a good start. Quality has been very strong so far.

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**Summer Squash:** Eastern squash volumes have recovered slightly from last week's extreme shortage of retail-quality product, but there are still challenges with pollination, cool weather and scarring to contend with. Georgia is onboard with light volumes and should provide some relief as more growers get into the game over the next 7-10 days. Yellow and zucchini squash availability has also been very snug in the West as Northern Mexico works through a weather-related light spot in production. Santa Maria, CA farms, which normally start around May 1<sup>st</sup>, are expecting a two-week delay in the start of their season.

**Green Beans:** Green bean supply has returned to more "normal" levels in the East after a challenging last week. Lake area farms are the primary production zone, as South Florida begins to wrap up and we wait for North Florida to begin. Western markets continue to work through the transition from Mexico to California and have seen lighter numbers this week.

**Eggplant:** Florida's eggplant volume is lighter this week as quality has become more of a concern (brown calyx, sunken areas). Eggplant numbers have also been lower in the West, but should improve when the California desert starts over the weekend.

**Chili Peppers:** Western chili peppers are in a state of transition with a wide mix of quality in the market. The better product is coming from new fields in Baja, while both Sonora and Sinaloa have some quality challenges. The East is finally seeing a decent amount of select chilies from the Plant City area with more varieties and volumes on the way. Quality is just average from the early harvests.

**Hard Squash:** Mexico's acorn and spaghetti squash are readily available, but butternut continues to be difficult. Quality is average, with some reports of scarring on spaghetti and discoloration on the acorn.

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**TRANSPORTATION FACTS**

\*Inching up another \$.03, the national average diesel fuel price moved from \$3.10 to \$3.13 per gallon this week

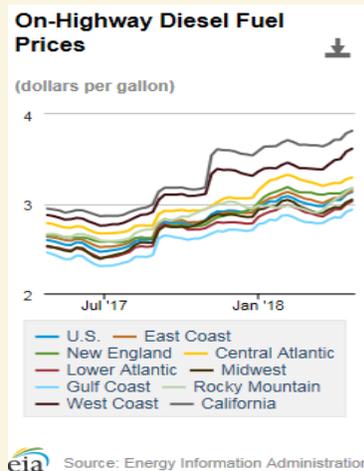
\* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.54 higher than the same time last year.

\* Every area in the country reported price hikes with the most notable from the Rocky Mountain and West Coast zones, where prices rose \$.04 per gallon.

\*California maintains its role as the high price leader for diesel at \$3.82 per gallon while the Gulf Coast region offers the lowest price at \$2.94 per gallon.

\*The WTI Crude Oil continues to climb this week, moving from \$66.52 to \$68.05 per barrel (up 2.3%).

\* Central & South Florida shippers report a shortage of trucks, but all other harvest areas have adequate levels of transportation available.



## NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

### Tech's Now a Top Concern for Grocers: Here's Where They're Investing in It: Annual Report

By: Randy Hofbauer, [www.progressivegrocer.com](http://www.progressivegrocer.com), April 19, 2018

Although human capital and competition remain the chief concerns over which grocers lose sleep, keeping up with technology has reached unprecedented heights of concern, rising to No. 3 (45.5 percent) from No. 9 since last year's Annual Report. And while Amazon might have many grocers backed into a corner, these retailers aren't going down without a fight: Nearly three in four (73.6 percent) respondents plan to increase their technology spend in 2018.

Technological innovations for marketing and merchandising have taken priority over traditional methods in 2018: Taking up the top three spots on the list of important strategies are in-store signage/digital media (71.1 percent), digital marketing (67.5 percent) and mobile marketing (57.9 percent), trailed far behind by direct mail (38.6 percent), newspaper inserts (29.8 percent), newspaper ads (23.7 percent), radio advertising (19.3 percent) and TV advertising (18.4 percent).

The biggest news comes on the omnichannel front: Fewer grocers are still in the planning and development phase, with 56.1 percent — compared with 43.3 percent last year — currently executing or running a fully integrated strategy using in-store, online and digital channels. However, smaller chains are further behind than larger ones, showing the advantages that third-party companies can have in assisting where scale and resources might be limited: While about one-third (32.1 percent) of respondents with fewer than 50 stores (versus 79.6 percent of those with 50-plus locations) are executing or running a fully integrated strategy, roughly half

(50.9 percent) said they're just getting started.

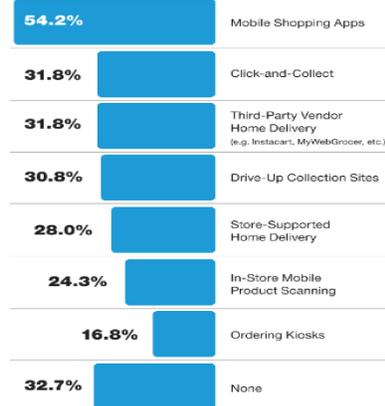
Although last year's report showed growth only in select omnichannel services being offered compared with the year prior, this year's showed robust expansion across the board. Mobile shopping apps saw the strongest amount of growth — from 29.6 percent to 54.2 percent — which corresponds with a shift in what grocers value in mobile devices over the past year.

Social media no longer seems to be the greatest value in mobile for grocers: Facebook, which topped last year's list, fell dramatically in this year's survey (59.1 percent to 25.9 percent), while order online/pickup in-store (42.6 percent versus 27.9 percent last year); POS loyalty card (32.4 percent versus 23.6 percent); ecoupons (55.6 percent versus 51.9 percent); and personalized discounts (27.8 percent versus 23.4 percent) saw stronger favor. Mobile wallets and scan-as-you-go/bypass checkout, although not represented last year, were selected by 16.7 percent and 17.6 percent of respondents, respectively.

Several grocers have been working to connect their loyalty and coupon programs with their ecommerce operations over the past year. Other grocers nationwide, have even worked to bring digital coupons to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants.

Meanwhile, retailers large and small have worked to expand mobile wallet functionality across stores while checkout-free

#### What omnichannel services do you offer?



Source: Progressive Grocer Market Research, 2018

technology has also expanded from giants to independents.

Aside from mobile shopping apps, all omnichannel offerings other than click-and-collect saw double-digit growth over the past year. This could be because click-and-collect saw strong growth in last year's report, meaning that grocers have moved into more sophisticated waters — for instance, in-store mobile product scanning (24.3 percent versus 8.5 percent) and ordering kiosks (16.8 percent versus 2.8 percent) saw some of the most impressive growth, while delivery services — whether store-supported (28 percent versus 14.1 percent) or third-party (31.8 percent versus 16.9 percent) — also had their year in the sun. Click-and-collect still grew, however, with nearly one-third of grocers now offering it, compared with just more than one-fifth last year.

#### What do you consider to be the most advantageous benefit offered by mobile devices/smartphones?



Source: Progressive Grocer Market Research, 2018

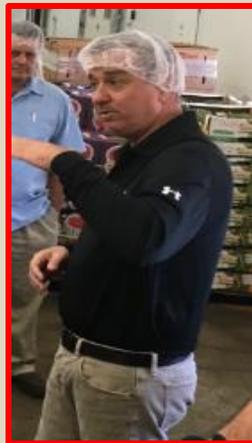


## Lipman on Location- Arizona

Lipman Arizona, formerly Legend Distributing, was founded in April of 2004. In December of 2014 we joined Lipman Family Farms.

Tomatoes have always been at our core. In addition to tomatoes, we offer many fresh fruits and vegetables including strawberries, melons, pineapples, Mexican veg, and organics. We have a solid foundation of both retail and food service business. We currently serve the Arizona, Southern California, New Mexico, and Pacific Northwest with our products.

Original founders Wayne Stalcup and Ric Crispo, along with a strong sales staff and operations team, continue to lead the charge for the future. Our goals remain staying flexible in an ever-changing environment and always servicing the customer 1<sup>st</sup>!



Ric Crispo conducts awesome in-house produce learning sessions for our customers!

### PRODUCE BAROMETER

ITEM	QUALITY	PRICING
Bell Pepper	Fair-Good	Steady
Cucumber	Fair-Good	Steady
Eggplant	Fair-Good	Steady
Green Beans	Average	Higher
Jalapenos	Varied	Steady
Onions	Good	Steady
Squash	Varied	Higher
Tomatoes	Very Good	Steady



### APRIL CALENDAR

- April-All Month**
- Fresh Florida Tomato Month
- April 29<sup>th</sup> - May 5<sup>th</sup>**
- National Small Business Week
- April 28<sup>th</sup>**
- World Day for Safety & Health at Work
- National Pool Opening Day
- April 29<sup>th</sup>**
- National Shrimp Scampi Day

### Duette, FL Weather

Fri Apr 27	Sat Apr 28	Sun Apr 29	Mon Apr 30	Tue May 1
84° F	84° F	87° F	87° F	85° F
60° F	62° F	66° F	65° F	65° F
SW 11 MPH	NW 8 MPH	NE 5 MPH	ENE 11 MPH	E 10 MPH
Precip 40%				

## KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

### Study: Shoppable Moments Drive Customer Purchases

By: Deena M. Amato-McCoy, [www.chainstoreage.com](http://www.chainstoreage.com), April 23, 2018

Retailers are opting for personalized content and unique experiences to grab more wallet share among digitally influenced customers. Today's shopper is in search of more memorable interactions and shoppable moments across touchpoints. However, these influencers need to move beyond traditional campaigns, and toward search, social media and the power of artificial intelligence (AI), according to "Enabling Experience-Driven Commerce Anytime, Anywhere," a report from Avionos.

For example, customers want to be engaged the minute they begin searching for merchandise — a process that two-thirds (66%) of consumers begin on Amazon or Google. A third of respondents (33%) said they begin their search on Amazon, and 32% begin with a Google search.

Social media is also becoming an active commerce channel in the new digital landscape. However, retailers need to look beyond using influencers to drive purchases. For example, 60% of consumers have never purchased a product promoted by a celebrity or social influencer, but more than half of consumers (55%) have made a purchase through a social media channel, such as Facebook, Instagram or Pinterest.

Instead, contextualized content inspires shoppers and drives their confidence. More than half (54%) of shoppers said they feel more confident in their online purchases if the retailer offers detailed product specifications. Meanwhile, 49% feel more confident if a product listing has extra content available. Companies that can provide a combination of three factors — detailed product specifications, a user-friendly return policy and extra content — would result in almost 100% confidence (94% of respondents chose one or more of those three), according to the study. "In the eyes of consumers, a product for sale online is only as good as the accompanying contextual information, product details and images. The better the content, the more confidence consumers have in a brand," the study said.

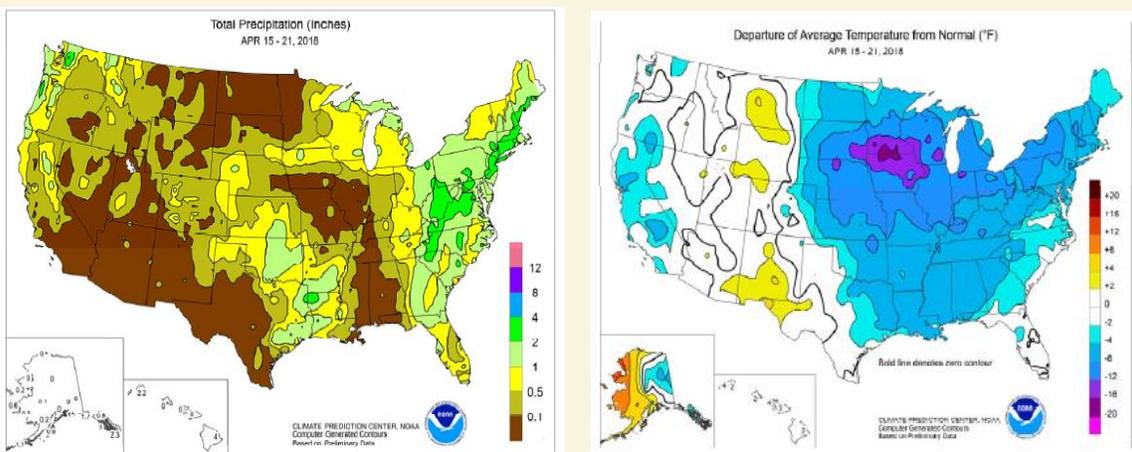
Despite the vast amount of product information available online, shoppers believe that physical retail is still relevant. In fact, a majority of consumers (63%) prefer to purchase big-ticket items, like electronics or furniture, in a store. Meanwhile, 52% said they prefer to research these products on desktop or mobile devices.

Customers also expect AI to streamline shopping experiences, especially as more shoppers adopt voice-assisted devices within their homes. In fact, 77% of respondents said the increase in voice assistants being used for ordering has positively impacted their perception of e-commerce. Meanwhile, nearly half (42%) of consumers feel that AI will lead to faster checkouts.

"While online shopping is now the norm for most consumers today, the in-store experience still plays a role in enhancing the overall shopping experience. Brands and retailers can bring the online and offline worlds together by embracing tactics like using physical locations as showrooms, leveraging digital to offer more information about a brand's story or products, or enabling services to buy online and pick up in stores," the study said.

## NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

### Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

### 5 Tips to Help Restauranteurs Master Menu Labeling Before May 7 Deadline

By: Betsy Craig, [www.fastcasual.com](http://www.fastcasual.com), April 19, 2018

It's that magical time of year once again. The trees are starting to bud, days are getting longer, sandals come out of the closet, and the foodservice industry gets ready for the menu-labeling deadline. However, unlike the warm weather and blooming plants, menu labeling is here to stay.

It's no secret that the industry has been burned on menu labeling before. Just last year, the enforcement date was changed just hours away from going into effect. The FDA is backing the regulations 100 percent this year, however, so covered establishments better get ready. We have compiled our top compliance tips here to ensure you take full advantage of these few short weeks before the May 7th enforcement deadline.

**1. Get your rounding right.** Did you know that each nutrient has different rounding rules and different insignificant values? And did you know that to a trained eye, it's really obvious when this isn't done correctly? Rounding is such an easy thing to watch for, it wouldn't be surprising if that's what inspectors hone in on. This guide can be used to help you or, better yet, an accredited third-party consultant can give you your values already rounded to perfection.

**2. Know your reasonable basis.** The FDA has not defined an allowable variance regarding the accuracy of posted nutritional values. Rather, they are requiring a "reasonable basis" behind a covered establishment's numbers. You need to know how your analysis was done, and why your numbers are what they are. While you don't need every detail of the analysis on hand, if the FDA requests specifics as to how your numbers were derived you'll be required to give them a detailed explanation.

**3. Don't forget the importance of training.** While menu labeling has been a part of the industry for more than eight years, store-level staff might not have experience with it yet. The importance of following printed recipes and order guides needs to be communicated to the team members at the front line serving guests. They should also be prepped with answers to frequently asked questions, such as, "Where is your additional nutrition information?" Or, "What does this range of numbers mean?"

**4. Documentation is key.** We've already covered that written recipes are critical. However, that's not the only thing that should be well documented. Let's say you source three hamburger buns depending on the market but have a plan to handle the nutritional differences in your posted information. That should be documented. Maybe you have an agreement in place with your supplier as to how they'll handle any sudden product shortages, so your nutrition information isn't impacted. That should be documented. Anything that helps further prove due diligence in presenting accurate nutrition information to the public should be in writing and securely stored.

**5. Know this is just the beginning.** If you give a mouse a cookie, he's going to want a glass of milk. If you give a consumer nutrition information, they're going to want an allergen chart. Today's diners are demanding more and more transparency from the foodservice establishments that serve them. They want to know what's in their food, and how they can find a meal that meets their special dietary needs. Assuming it was done correctly, by the time a covered establishment has put in the effort to analyze its menu items, it's not much more work to complete an allergen review as well. As long as it's accurate and reliable, it's the next logical piece of information to present to guests.

Spring fever may just be starting to set in, but there's no time to waste in getting compliant with the menu labeling regulations. We're just a few short weeks away from the May 7th deadline, and this time (I think finally) it's here to stay.

FRESH

# TOMATOES


the best of nature™

MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
PACK YOUR BAGS!

**May 11-12, 2018**  
West Coast Produce Expo  
JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa  
Palm Desert, CA  
[www.westcoastproduceexpo.com](http://www.westcoastproduceexpo.com)

**July 28-29, 2018**  
PMA Foodservice Conference & Expo  
Portola Hotel & Spa and Monterey Conference Center  
Monterey, CA  
[www.pma.com/events/foodservice](http://www.pma.com/events/foodservice)

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