



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Florida's round tomato production is down slightly this week but plantings have spread out a bit and a full range of sizing is available. Quality has been very nice on crown fruit, but there are some scarring concerns on later picks that have been hit with wind and weather. Roma numbers have been consistent but remain very light. Some growers have stronger grape tomato harvests and others have lighter yields this week with the net result of steady volumes.

As temperatures and weather have improved, Mainland Mexico is beginning to hit its stride with mature green and vine ripe tomato production. Harvests are heavier to big fruit right now and volume is expected to remain strong through most of February. Roma and grape numbers are also up to speed, with ample supply crossing to meet market needs. Overall quality is good.

Bell Peppers: Challenges with green bells continue. Mexico's farms are now reporting bloom drop from the cold temperatures that came through a few weeks ago in addition to slow sizing progress due to current cooler than desired temperatures. Harvests are also being held up because some of the peppers on the vine are weaker and very susceptible to bruising. Quality has been good up to now, but product is having to be graded intensely. Florida's limited volume has been fairly steady although some farms have had to put off harvests due to tender fruit. Quality has been mostly good despite some occasional reports of stem issues.

Cucumbers: Honduras has a steady supply of cucumbers with good quality. Look for a flush of product next week as growers hit a peak in production. Mexico's volume has also picked up with more new fields starting over the weekend. Quality has been strong with no issues.

Summer Squash: Homestead's squash production continues to be extremely light and there are significant

quality concerns with yellow squash. Honduras is bringing some nice quality zucchini into Eastern markets but there is no yellow to speak of. Fortunately, Mexico's crops are starting to come on as new fields start and better weather conditions take hold.

Green Beans: Florida's green bean crops have hit a snag in production due to some weather last weekend. That, coupled with cooler weather, have reduced yields this week. Lighter numbers are expected to continue over the next 7-10 days. Quality is still nice up to this point, but we could see some weather effects on product over the next week or so. However, Mexico farms expect a fairly steady path for the next few weeks, as weather and quality have rebounded.

Eggplant: Good quality eggplant is extremely limited this week. Mexican shippers have steady supply, but cooler mornings have caused quality problems such as liver spots and sunken areas on a large portion of the crop. Florida's supply is very light due to crops ending early and some of the same cool weather concerns that Mexico is facing,

Chili Peppers: Mexico's chili pepper crops continue to struggle as growers and crops seek to rebound from crop loss and serious damage back in the Fall. Cooler temperatures across Sonora and Sinaloa are causing slow growth and defects. Moisture has also contributed to the lack of quality supply, causing dirt film, weaker walls and discolored seed cavities. With Florida's minimal numbers at this time of year, expect at least the next few weeks to remain very challenging.

Hard Squash: Rain in Mexico's hard squash growing regions is beginning to show itself with ground lay on acorn, stem end mold on butternut and spaghetti and scarring/lack of color on spaghetti squash. These crops generally ship until March, but with these concerns, we could see things wrap up in February. Eastern markets continue to have Honduran butternut and spaghetti available, but little to no acorn.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*The national diesel average continues to fall, although a bit more gently this week. A gallon of fuel costs \$2.97, down \$.01 from last week's \$2.98.

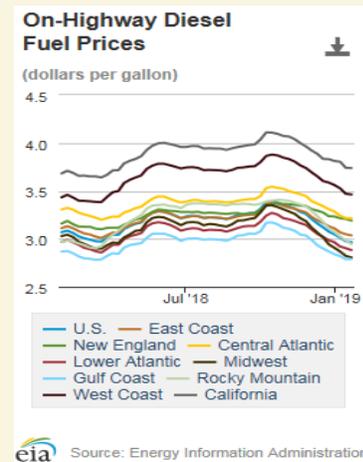
* The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.06 LOWER than the same time last year.

* All areas but the Gulf Coast reported price declines, with the most significant decrease coming out of the Rocky Mountains, where diesel prices are down \$.04 per gallon.

*California continues to have the highest diesel prices in the country at \$3.74 per gallon while the Gulf Coast is the low-price leader at \$2.79 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price remained relatively steady this week (up less than 1%), moving from \$52.11 to \$52.57 per barrel.

*The USDA truck report is not available this week due to the lack of government funding.



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KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

The Top 10 Consumer Trends Are...

By: Marianne Wilson, www.chainstorage.com, January 17, 2019

Everyone is an expert. And everyone, regardless of their age, wants to be treated as younger.

Those are two of the top 10 global consumer trends according to a report from Euromonitor International. The market research firm noted that, amid political upheaval in developed markets and fast, totally unprecedented change in developing economies, many of the trends are about “taking back control and asserting ourselves.”

“In the face of turmoil and uncertainty, we feel more powerful when we can go back to basics and eat an egg laid by our own hen, or actively choose to find solace away from digital demands without junking them completely, the report stated. “We want to get that thing or service seamlessly and easily. We want to make a difference to the world by buying more thoughtfully.”

Here is a brief review of Euromonitor’s top 10 global consumer trends in 2019:

1. Age Agnostic: Boundaries of old age are shifting. As people live longer and take better care of themselves, older consumers feel and want to be treated as younger.

“Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are the generation with the most disregard for age,” the report stated. “They do not think of themselves as old, and they most definitely do not want to be referred to in those terms. ... These are a new kind of mature consumers — a diverse group who enjoy the same things as their younger counterparts and want to continue to be themselves for as long as possible. This means they want products and



services that help them stay as youthful as possible in mind and body, not trying to change things — just look and be the best they can.”

2. Back to Basics for Status:

Shoppers are searching for authentic products and experiences, moving away from overt materialism to simplicity as well as from generic to higher quality products. Trends in food and drink perfectly reflect the shift of Back to Basics for Status. Buying hyperlocal food is growing in popularity for a range of reasons including that it supports local businesses, food is fresher and tastes better, it reduces the environmental impact by eliminating ‘food miles’ and may offer better value for money as it encourages the consumption of in-season fruit and vegetables.

3. Conscious Consumer: What used to be the domain of ethically-positioned, niche producers is now being embraced by conventional companies through higher welfare products. Conscious Consumers are influential, and the trend will spread to others. Animal welfare concerns will evolve further and extend to other industries beyond food, beauty and fashion, to home care, home furnishings, pet food and so on.

4. Digitally Together: As our digital capabilities and comfort using new technologies grows, so will the potential of what can be created or experienced together, but remotely.

5. Everyone’s an Expert: Whereas previously shoppers relied on a certain brand or information source, now companies must constantly innovate to entice more inquisitive shoppers. The breadth of information available to savvy consumers means that stores can no longer get away with arbitrarily high prices or lack of transparency—the Everyone’s an Expert consumer will always outsmart them.

6. Finding My JOMO: The Fear Of Missing Out has now given place to the Joy Of Missing Out. Consumers want to protect their mental wellbeing, disconnecting from technology and prioritizing what they truly want and enjoy doing.

7. I Can Look After Myself: As people become more self-sufficient, they take preventative measures against illness, unhappiness and discomfort without consulting a professional.



8. I Want a Plastic-Free World:

The push for a plastic-waste-free society has gained momentum, creating a virtuous circle where businesses gain by improving sustainability. Plastics, such as single-use packaging for food and beverages and micro-plastics found in beauty, personal and home care, as well as plastics produced by the fast fashion industry, are coming under increased scrutiny as the ‘Blue Planet Effect’ shines a light on the plastic-based waste products that end up polluting the natural world.

9. I Want it Now!: Consumers seek instant gratification and frictionless experiences that mesh with their lifestyles, allowing them to dedicate more time to their professional or social lives.

10. Loner Living: More people – especially older consumers – across the world break the stigma of living alone and embrace their independent lifestyles. Companies may continue to ignore single households because they believe that they are diverse individuals within larger groups, but the emergence of solo Loner Living consumers is changing that calculus. They often seek experiences that replicate companionship, whether that includes adopting a pet or travelling in groups. Increasingly, people are giving up the idea of finding lifelong companionship. Brands have a long way to go to partner with them as they develop their independent lifestyle.

MERCHANDISING MINUTE

Help Your Cashiers Help You

By: Armand Lobato, www.thepacker.com, January 23, 2019

“What’s in the till?” That’s one way a produce manager might ask how business is at any given point. Just a way of inquiring how sales are going. The “till” reference is a good visual. After all, it’s at the checkstand, following the repetitive clicks and scanner beeps, when produce rolls down the belt. You’ve ordered, prepped, merchandised and finally sold the produce to your customer. Now it’s time for the front-end employees to identify and correctly ring up those produce items.

Those employees, call them checkers or cashiers, are a vital part of your produce success. If you don’t consider them so, you might make it a point of thinking otherwise. Even the word “cashier” should give you a clue. Dictionary.com defines “cashier” as “An employee, as in a market or department store, who collects payments for customer purchases.” Which should raise the question: How do you suppose they handle fresh produce transactions?

Speaking as a frequent, mostly hand-basket customer, when I go through the self-checkout lane, a part of me dreads when I get down to my produce purchases. And I’m a produce guy! I can identify or look up PLUs fast enough on the store’s handy posted charts. However, a part of me wants to ring everything up as 4011 — the universal code for bananas. If this slows me down or I view it as an obstacle, can cashiers be that much different?

That’s why it’s important to get to know your store’s front-end managers, and especially the checker staff. In grocery store early days, cashiers not only had to know their produce, but they also had to pass a daily price test too. No longer a requirement, but today it helps a produce manager to form a positive bond with the cashiers and recruit their support.

This might be won by enlisting the store and front-end managers to have the cashiers walk the produce department for a few minutes prior to their shift. Then they could see what’s on ad, what new items are available, and talk to the produce manager about what to look out for.

Another way to get cashiers to tune into fresh produce is to arrange a weekly produce ID test. If you set up 10-15 items per week, things you think the checkers should be on the lookout for, it will help them tell the difference between like items, organic vs. conventional, or identify new or seasonal items that weren’t around the previous week. Help your cashiers help you. When produce is rung up correctly, your sales and gross profit will be far more accurate, and it will help keep shrink in check too.

PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



JANUARY CALENDAR

January All Month

National Clean Up Your

Computer Month

National Soup Month

January 26th

National Florida Day

National Spouse’s Day

January 28th

National Have Fun at Work Day

National Corn Chip Day

Immokalee, FL Weather

Fri Jan 25	Sat Jan 26	Sun Jan 27	Mon Jan 28	Tue Jan 29
65° F	70° F	69° F	70° F	73° F
43° F	51° F	52° F	53° F	56° F
N 10 MPH	N 13 MPH	N 8 MPH	NNE 8 MPH	VNW 7 MPH
		Precip 50%	Precip 50%	

NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

Do Your Shoppers Want More Vegetarian and Vegan Options?

By: Ashley Nickle, www.produceretailer.com, January 22, 2019

A new ranking of the best cities for vegetarians includes college towns and metropolises among other types of locales. Apartment Guide recently released a list that evaluated cities based on their number of vegetarian, vegan and organic dining options compared to the population of the city. The top five on the list are Charleston, S.C., Berkeley, Calif., Boulder, Colo., Ann Arbor, Mich., and Pittsburgh, Pa.



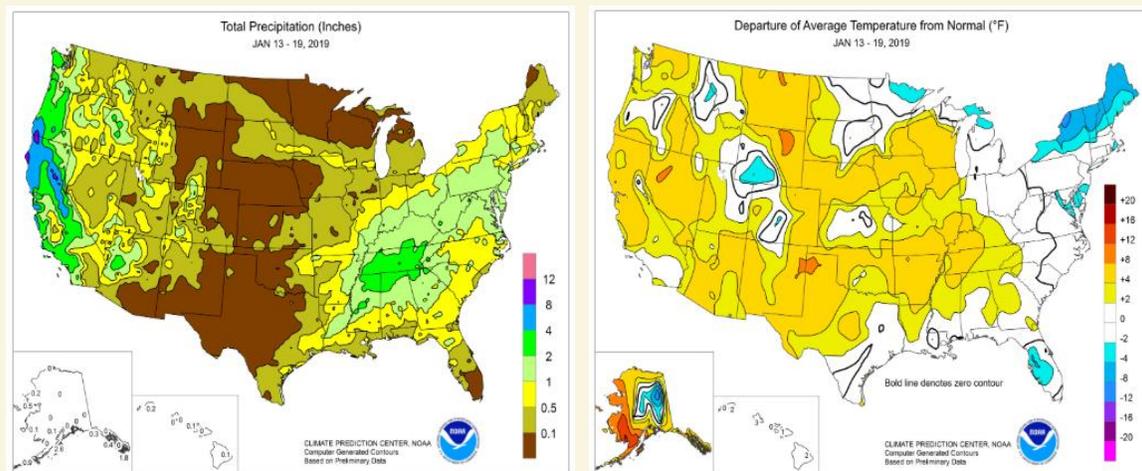
Charleston has 38 vegetarian restaurants, 21 vegan and four organic, per the ranking. Berkeley — home to the University of California, Berkeley — has 29 vegetarian dining options, 18 vegan and six organic. Boulder — home of the University of Colorado — has 30 vegetarian restaurants, 14 vegan and two organic. Ann Arbor — home of the University of Michigan — has 27 vegetarian places, 16 vegan and three organic. Pittsburgh has 76 vegetarian spots, 36 vegan and two organic.

Next in the ranking were Savannah, Ga., Salt Lake City, Utah, Orlando, Fla., Portland, Ore, and Richmond, Va. Seattle, Las Vegas, Atlanta, San Francisco and Washington D.C. are among the cities in the Top 25. The full ranking — from 1 to 50 — is available here.

If your store is in one of these places, how much have you adjusted your assortment or merchandising to account for shoppers who are looking for vegetarian and vegan options? Maybe you make a point to include vegan or vegetarian recipes on your social media feeds, or maybe you occasionally merchandise together the ingredients for an easy dish that would work for vegetarians and looks appealing for other shoppers as well. How are you leveraging your knowledge of who your shoppers are?

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



RESTAURANT NEWS & VIEWS

What Really Makes an LTO Stand Out?

By: Sara Rush Wirth, www.restaurantbusinessonline.com, January 22, 2019

There's been ample research into how much consumers are willing to pay for limited-time offers. But for many, it's not just a low price that wins their attention. So what is it that draws diners in? In a bit of in-office research, a few things stood out to our editors.

Vivid food photography: Whether they are seen via traditional advertising materials or on social media—or even restaurants' websites—pictures of the dish are one of the most common ways to garner attention, according to our staff. Not just any picture will do, though. Lighting matters, as does the color and build of the actual food. That said, a professional shot isn't always necessary. In fact, sometimes an iPhone shot is all that's needed, especially if it's just going on social media.

Unique ingredients: Multiple respondents said they'd be likely to order an LTO that shines a light on an ingredient they hadn't tried before. This is especially true, they said, if the ingredient is part of a more familiar format, such as a topping for a burger or fries. Heck, that's how I had my first taste of kimchi many years back: kimchi poutine, or french fries topped with kimchi and other ingredients.

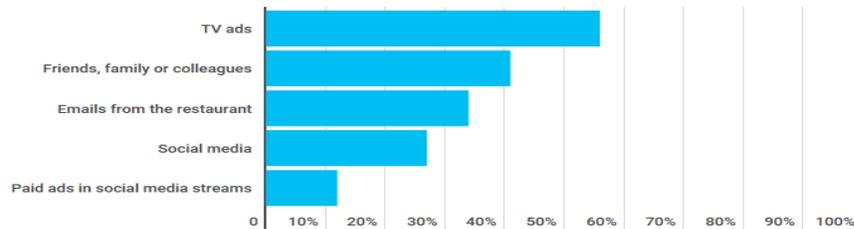
Novelty: One respondent specifically called out the type of LTOs launched by Taco Bell. They are funky enough to catch consumers' attention, but not so off the wall that they don't appeal to the brand's target audience. A prime example was the chain's launch of its Doritos Locos Tacos.

Combination of flavors: This might include a sweet and salty dessert or something more savory. With so many foodservice options, diners get excited about unique items they can't get anywhere else—and that comes down to the description. Not only should operators share the key ingredients of an LTO, but some kind of nongeneric descriptor is also helpful, as long as it's not overused, like "umami bomb."

Price: It still matters. While diners aren't necessarily looking for something on a dollar menu every time they order an LTO, a lower price point—or a price seen as a value—can encourage trial.

Now, nearly two in five diners say that limited-time offers are likely to influence a visit to a restaurant. That number jumps to nearly half when an LTO is offered at a discounted price. For these menu items to drive traffic, though, guests need to first learn that they are available. So how do they know?

How do you usually hear about deals or promotions from restaurants?



Source: Technomic Value & Pricing Consumer Trend Report

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March 7-9, 2019
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Come join #TeamLipman at Booth #1125!

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Philadelphia Airport Marriott
Philadelphia, PA
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