



MARKET UPDATE

Round Tomatoes: Florida's round tomato numbers are a notch better than the last several weeks as per acre yields have improved and many growers have transitioned into new crops. Most are harvesting crown picks this week which has brought the size profile up where 50% are 5x6's or larger. Quality is really nice as well. Look for steady volumes for the next few weeks, then a light to moderate increase when most growers move up to the Palmetto/ Ruskin area for the season. Mexico has had a little less product available this week due to a spell of cooler weather. But, this week's warmer temperatures should bring stronger product flow going into next week. Western volume and quality will continue to improve as we move further past the prior weather events.

Roma Tomatoes: Florida's roma volume remains steady but light. Demand for FL's fruit has been strong as quality has been very nice. Production should stay about the same for another 3-4 weeks, which is when Spring acreage will come online. West Mexico's crops continue to improve with better supplies and quality coming the further we move past the previous weather.

Grape Tomatoes: Mexico's grape tomato production was down a bit this week due to cooler weather but it was hardly noticed since demand was light. FL growers are experiencing good yields and quality from new crops. With Mexico expected to return to consistent volumes in the next few days, the immediate future looks good for grape tomatoes.

Bell Peppers: Some Mexican growing areas received rain this week which pushed off harvesting and kept supply on the light side. Expect Western supply to be less than desired until the Coachella season starts around the 1st of April. Although availability has varied by day, the overall supply of bell peppers in FL is light, but steady. XL sizing is in high demand, as usual, and is snug. The volume should turn up in another 7-10 days as new Spring crops come on and acreage is increased. Quality reports are mixed from both FL and Mexico.

Cucumbers: Cucumbers look to be the challenge for the next few weeks. Mexico's production decreased

significantly this week as overcast conditions and rain limited current production. The Sinaloa crop has taken a big hit from the Winter rains and we're not expecting to see significantly more supply for 2-3 weeks when Sonora comes back in. In the East, Honduras is winding down quickly with more offgrades than #1's available now. Florida farms have started in a light way but the early crops are experiencing light yields due to weather issues, which is common on this first fruit. There is scarring on the fruit (from wind) but overall quality is pretty good. Look for volume to improve as more acreage comes online in 10-14 days.

Green Beans: Florida is the place to go for beans as new crops have come on strong with good yields and quality. With Mexico growing areas receiving some rain this week, supply has slowed in the West. There are plantings due to harvest over the next 2-3 weeks as long as rain hasn't caused too many issues.

Summer Squash: Squash will continue to be hit and miss for the next 7-10 days. A few shippers from North Mexico will get underway over the weekend and the southern areas look to have another 2 weeks to go. Overall supply in the West should begin to balance out and have the potential to increase by the end of the month. Florida doesn't have a lot of either squash this week as yields are very light on current harvests due to weather and pollination issues. It'll be another 2-3 weeks until Plant City starts and there's significant volume in the East. Quality from both FL and Mexico has been mostly good on zucchini but is fair to poor on yellow due to scarring and scuffing. We anticipate quality improvements as new crops get started.

Eggplant: Eggplant demand continues to be strong and supplies are on the short side. With acreage down in FL and cooler, cloudy weather in Mexico, supply will remain snug as we move into April.

Hothouse English Cucumbers: As one major grower in Culiacan winds down, we'll begin to see less supply of hothouse cucs in Nogales. But, never fear! Eastern Canada's production is coming on strong and supply is

plentiful. Florida crops are also in the midst of a flush and have good numbers to bring to the table.

Chili Peppers: Overall chili pepper availability has gotten snug. With high national demand in Mexico, virus issues in Sinaloa caused by prior weather, and some weather-related crop losses in Sonora, supply is light at a time when demand is high. Quality is hit or miss, and serrano, Anaheim and tomatillo volumes are especially limited. FL's supply of chilies is still at seasonally light volumes. Look for a little more help from South FL in a couple weeks and more significant volume in Plant City when they get rolling in 3-4 weeks.

Hard Squash: Hard squash is all over the place in terms of quality and availability as older blocks end and newer ones begin. Acorn availability has improved from new crop harvests and quality seems to be okay at the moment. Butternut and spaghetti are coming from both new and old growing areas so there is a wide variety of quality. Scarring is an issue on spaghetti from old and new plantings. With little help from the East other than a handful of Honduran butternut and spaghettis, hard squash may be in for a roller coaster ride for the next few months.

Mini Sweet Peppers: Mainland Mexico's production of mini sweets has been adequate to satisfy demand but we have seen lighter numbers and more greening on arrivals in Nogales over the past week.

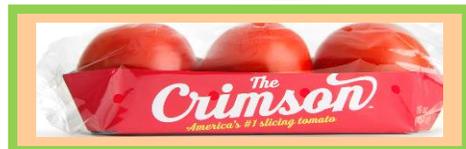
Colored Bell Peppers: With little sun over the past 10 days and some cooler weather affecting major production areas in Mexico, colored bell supply has dropped off this week. Orange is still the shortest of the three colors.

Organic Veg: Overall production remains light on yellow squash, zucchini and green bells but our Grown True fields have been providing enough supply to meet our demand. Cucumbers are a bit different- very scarce this week as growers are between crops lost from mildew and new plantings coming on in 7-10 days.

ON THE HORIZON CONTENTS

- Chef's Corner- page 3
- Health Matters- page 4
- Keep Your Eye on the Consumer- page 5
- March Calendar- page 3

- National Weather Spotlight- page 4
- Pack Your Bags - page 5
- Produce Barometer-page 3
- Restaurant Industry News- page 2



RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Restaurants Must Adopt a Gig Attitude to Attract Gen Z Workers

By: Amanda Nichols, www.fastcasual.com, March 10, 2020

As members of Generation Z search for their first job throughout high school and college, the multigenerational workforce continues to widen — and with that comes a new set of expectations for employers trying to keep up. A recent survey conducted by The Workforce Institute at Kronos Incorporated has uncovered helpful insights on the attitudes and expectations of Gen Zers at work. Of course, more than half (54%) said pay was the most important consideration when applying for their first full-time job. But this next generation also wants work-life balance, a good manager, and schedule flexibility — and they want their work to be interesting and their company to be engaging. (No pressure!)

Restaurants have a unique opportunity to engage Gen Zers from the get-go: The survey found that nearly one in four would gladly take a job in the foodservice industry while in high school or college. In fact, restaurant work is second only to retail work, which is preferred by 28%. However, the real opportunity exists for employers who are able to convert their employees' initial interest into year-over-year retention — even after high school or college, where the survey revealed interest in the hospitality field significantly drops.

In order to attract the newest generation — and keep them engaged for the long haul — restaurant leaders should remain invested in advancing their workplace culture. This means providing a modern employee experience (think: clocking in and out from a mobile device, or finding coverage for a shift automatically and in real time), introducing forward-thinking workplace policies to encourage work-life balance, and holding managers accountable to ensure a supportive working environment — all things that Gen Zers will innately expect from their employer.

Money still talks.

In an era of ever-rising college tuition rates and student loan debt, money continues to motivate employees above all else, regardless of location or vocation. When applying for their first full-time job, pay is most important to 54% of Gen Zers. And this mindset carries into their first few years on the job: Just about half (44%) will measure their personal success at a company by their salary.

It should come as no surprise that money transcends any notion of a generational divide; while Gen Zers in the workforce today are more likely to view their current job as simply a way to make money versus a career or even a career-building opportunity, this is not far from the thinking shared by the generations that came before them.

Give them the flexibility to find workplace independence.

Although Gen Zers are split 50/50 on whether or not they would forgo stable employment in exchange for gig work, it is abundantly clear that this generation is drawn to the flexibility and independence that gig work offers. More than half (55%) of Gen Zers are drawn to gig jobs solely based on the ability to work their own schedules. In fact, it's become critical that traditional employers, restaurants included, consider how to provide these staple features of schedule flexibility and independence to their employees. An employer's ability to both maintain a strong talent pipeline and boost employee retention are riding on this.

One-third (33%) of Gen Zers worldwide said they would "never" tolerate an employer that gave them no say over their work schedule, and one in four (26%) would work harder and stay longer at a company that supports flexible scheduling. In Canada (33%) and the U.S. (31%), flexibility for employees to work when, where, and how they want is motivation to deliver their "best work."

Enhance the traits that gig work lacks: Stability and structure.

Across the globe, the vast majority (90%) of Gen Zers have at least some hesitation to participate in the gig economy. (Hint: They fear an unstable paycheck.) This suggests there is a sizeable opportunity for employers like restaurants to compete with the gig economy for talent by adopting the positive aspects of gig work — flexibility and independence — while still providing the stability and structure that traditional employment brings. This combination is what Gen Zers truly crave.

Above all else, Gen Zers are looking for a job that differs from the long stressful hours their parents worked. They expect their employer to embrace, not reject or ignore, the benefits of digital automation and real-time accountability, similar to the consumer technology they've grown up using. Employers that are supportive of these expectations and encourage Gen Z employees to be themselves at work will hold on to high performers longer and, as an added bonus, inspire them to do their best work.



TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*Continuing its downward descent for the 9th week in a row, the National Diesel Average fell almost \$.04, which puts the price at \$2.81 per gallon.

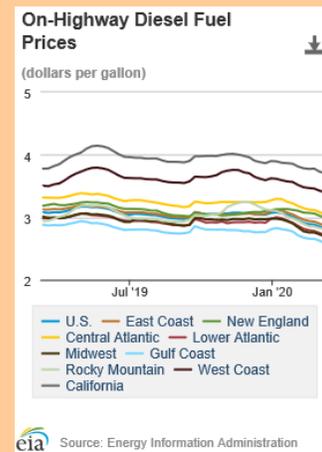
*The average price for a gallon of diesel is \$.26 lower than the same time last year.

*All regions of the country reported price declines ranging from \$.02-.05 per gallon. The Gulf Coast's fuel price dropped the most, and is down \$.05.

*California still tops the charts at \$3.71 per gallon while the Gulf Coast remains the low-price leader at \$2.58 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price plummeted 25.1% this week, moving from \$45.90 to \$34.36 per barrel.

*Other than a slight shortage at Mexico-Texas crossing points, trucks are available in adequate supply throughout the country this week.





CHEF'S CORNER

Contributed By: Wil Wilbur, Manager of Culinary Development

This month we'll focus on some new twists on flavors to keep everyone on track with healthier food choices and vegetable-heavy meals- from flavorful dips and veg-centric entrees all the way to dessert where vegetables aren't just savory! It's not hard to level up your snack times, evening meals or dinner parties with the added complexity of some fresh fruits and vegetables! Pops of color, added nutrients and some creativity to infuse new ingredients within every-day items is as easy as pie (or chocolate beet cake)!

Using Lipman's fresh cut product line provides you with the best of nature, cut fresh and packed for convenience year round. Our product-specific processing and patented packaging drives optimal shelf life – meaning you'll receive only the best product, every time. And this produce not only tastes good... it helps customers save valuable time in the kitchen, and the convenient packaging also reduces the risk of foodborne illness, by decreasing the opportunity for cross-contamination. For more information, please reach out to your usual Lipman contact or one of our fresh cut specialists: Johnathan Maldonado at 214.907.0695, Wil Wilbur at 214.213.0559, Chris Daulerio- East at 215.870.8956 or Brian Arbini- West at 209.402.5184.

Veg-Centric Entrees

Who says meat has to be the center of the plate? An increasing trend in millennial and Gen Z generations is the gravitation towards smaller portions of meat and larger portions of produce on the plate. Whether or not you are plant-based, vegan, or vegetarian, anyone can enjoy these veggie-centric meal and side options - don't worry, the protein is still there!

Lipman Ingredients

Gnocchi Vegetable Stir-Fry

3/8" Diced Red Bell Pepper	10lb, 20lb
3/8" Diced Green Bell Pepper	10lb, 20lb
1/4" Half Moon Yellow Squash	8lb
Halved Grape Tomatoes	5lb, 10lb, 20lb

Zucchini Carbonara

Zucchini Noodles	3.5lb, 8lb
5/8" Diced Butternut Squash	5lb, 10lb, 20lb
3/8" Diced Tomato	5lb, 10lb, 20lb

Veggie Stuffed Sweet Potato

1/4" Sliced Red Pepper	8lb, 16lb
1/4" Sliced Green Pepper	8lb, 16lb
1/4" Sliced Red Onion	8lb, 16lb

Zucchini Chickpea Burger

3/8" Diced Zucchini	8lb, 16lb
1/4" Sliced Tomato	5lb, 10lb, 22lb
Sliced Serrano	

Gnocchi Vegetable Stir-Fry

Sautéed green and red bell peppers, yellow squash, broccoli, and gnocchi tossed with olive oil rosemary basil roasted grape tomatoes



Zucchini Carbonara

Zucchini noodles, diced tomatoes, bacon, cubed butternut squash, egg, and parmesan



Veggie Stuffed Slow Roasted Sweet Potato

Topped with creamy cheese sauce



Zucchini Chickpea Burger

Diced zucchini and chick peas in a ground chuck blend, topped with cheese. LTO on a potato roll. Served with parsnip fries and serrano lime ranch



PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



MARCH CALENDAR

- All Month
- National Nutrition Month
- March 17th
- St. Patrick's Day
- March 19th
- Vernal Equinox- Spring Begins
- March 20th
- National Ravioli Day
- Great American Meat Out Day
- March 21st
- National Common Courtesy Day

Estero, FL Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17
85° F	85° F	85° F	86° F	85° F
67° F	68° F	69° F	69° F	67° F
E 3 MPH	ENE 6 MPH	ENE 5 MPH	E 6 MPH	E 8 MPH

HEALTH MATTERS

As Coronavirus Fears Grow, Delivery Operators Offer Contactless Options

By: Michael Browne, www.supermarketnews.com, March 9, 2020

Amid widespread fears over coronavirus, delivery operators such as Instacart, DoorDash and Postmates are taking extra measures to protect the health and safety of the delivery ecosystem, which involves food and package handling stretching from grocery stores and restaurants to gig drivers to consumers.

Instacart, the online grocery delivery system available at nearly 25,000 stores in more than 5,500 cities in the U.S. and Canada, has been testing its new "Leave at My Door Delivery" feature and last week rolled it out to all customers across North America. "Leave at My Door Delivery" was originally designed to provide a more flexible option for customers that may not be home at the time of delivery.

In a statement, Instacart announced, "Over the last week, in particular, we observed a significant surge in consumer adoption and opt-in usage of the feature. Based on the increased demand for this new product feature, we've now made it available to all Instacart customers — bringing even more flexibility and optionality to their grocery delivery experience." Customers can now opt-in to "Leave at My Door Delivery" as part of their delivery options at checkout, and can also provide more specific delivery instructions like a gate code or apartment number. A real-time photo will alert customers when their groceries are at their doorstep.

On Monday, food delivery company DoorDash said it is "testing enhanced features for contactless delivery to be rolled out shortly." Additionally, DoorDash said it is reminding consumers in affected areas of the app's "delivery instruction" feature, which allows requests for food to be left at the door along with a photo of where the food should be left. "We will continue to closely monitor and take action in response to this developing situation," the San Francisco-based company said.

The delivery market leader in the U.S. has also set up a tips page for its Dashers, or drivers. The page lists actions and advice for protecting drivers and others from the coronavirus. The page, for example, tells drivers to be vigilant about cleaning their cars and hot bags. "Keep surfaces, including your hot bag and vehicle, clean by using regular household cleaning spray or wipes," the site states.

While third-party delivery operators can't control when gig employees opt to work, the company strongly encouraged drivers to stay at home if they feel sick especially if "you are experiencing respiratory symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, or shortness of breath, cold or flu-like symptoms."

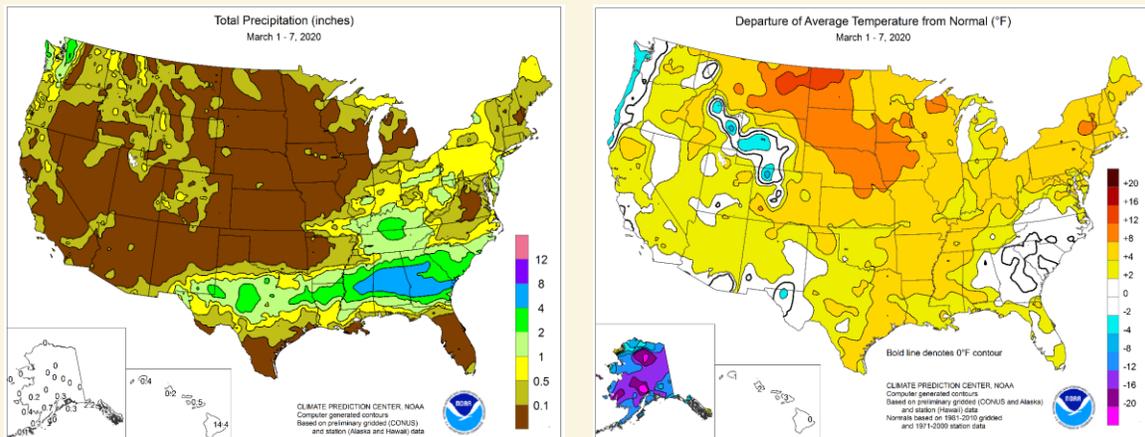
DoorDash said employees based in Seattle, one of the most impacted cities in the U.S., have been told to work from home. The city's onboarding Dasher, or driver, support center has also been closed. The company said it is also preparing to distribute much-needed supplies such as hand sanitizers to drivers in affected areas.

Restaurant delivery company Postmates has also introduced a non-contact delivery option on its app for customers who prefer restaurant or merchant deliveries to be left at the door. Drivers are alerted to the preference at the time of delivery. "We're the first food delivery company in the U.S. to offer this and we think that it is a way to make both customers and the fleet comfortable while making and receiving deliveries," the third-party delivery company told Nation's Restaurant News, a sister publication of Supermarket News.

"For corporate employees, we've suspended non-essential travel and have always had a flexible work-from-home policy, at the manager's discretion," DoorDash said.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Last Week's Precipitation Totals and Average Temperature Deviations



KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

Millennials Meet Their Match in Organic Produce

By: D. Gail Fleenor, www.progressivegrocer.com, March 10, 2020

Organic produce may be a small part of produce sales, but it's important to Millennials, the largest group of consumers and organic shoppers. Ask customers about organic produce, and most young shoppers will say they think it's healthier, cleaner and safer than traditional produce, while many older shoppers may say it's more expensive.

How Popular is Organic Produce?

Organic continues to be a growth driver for produce, according to the 2019 "Power of Produce" report from Arlington, Va.-based FMI - The Food Industry Association. Organic produce is a small part of the entire produce category, at 6.9%, according to the report, but sales gains are driven by increased household penetration, growing availability and increased purchases among buyers. The FMI survey found that while 61% of shoppers expect to buy about the same amount of organic produce in 2020, 30% expect to expand their organic produce purchases. Organic produce is driving new dollars in categories around the store based on increased availability in terms of SKUs and channels offering organic variety, increased purchasing among current users, and growing household penetration, the FMI report notes.

Who Are Millennial Organic Shoppers?

Just as it took a while to learn who Baby Boomers are, Millennials are still a mystery to many. This group is generally pegged as ages 18 to 35, or 22 to 37, depending on the source you read. We hear about this demographic so often because it's not only the largest group of organic consumers and organic produce consumers, but it also has the largest number of parents of young children. Because of that, Millennials are most likely to consider their kids' health when shopping. Currently, they're the group most interested in cooking, planning meals and even reading labels to make sure they're purchasing food with the least additives. This is also the group most likely to do grocery shopping online.

Millennials don't settle for just any food in their shopping carts, according to a national survey conducted independently by YouGov in 2019. The survey found that this group is serious about what foods they buy. In fact, 70% spend more on food than they do on travel. Most consider themselves to be "adventurous" eaters, and 60% make an effort to cook new dishes. This group wants to know the story behind how their food is produced or grown. In the survey, the biggest trend found was that Millennials want to make "informed purchasing decisions." Food quality is a priority for this group, with 80% saying that they're willing to pay more for quality. Additionally, transparency in food sourcing is important to more than 65% of those surveyed. In fresh organic food such as produce, almost 70% of Millennials read labels more closely than they did five years ago, and half of those surveyed buy more organic food than five years ago. Eating healthfully is a normal part of each day for Millennials.

Merchandising Organic Fruits and Vegetables

Merchandising organic produce is valuable time spent. Cross marketing within the department of organic produce with locally grown and value-added items can bring additional sales, since there's a high crossover in interest among organic produce shoppers. Value-added produce, which is convenient and saves time by being pre-cut, pre-washed or microwave-ready, appeals to core organic shoppers, who make up 36% of value-added customers according to FMI's survey. Other ways retailers can better merchandise their organic produce, according to Rockville, Md.- based Packaged Facts, include:

- *Providing recipes for how to cook or prepare fresh produce items
- *Providing more detailed nutrition information such as calorie and vitamin content for each fruit and vegetable
- *Presenting the "story" of where the produce comes from, including the name of the farm, a photo of the farm and information about the farm's history
- *Offering unique varieties of produce, and information about what makes these products different
- *Using farmers' market displays where possible; for organic produce, these markets are competition

These moves are likely to attract more Millennials, who, as Packaged Facts illustrates, often "love buying vegetables that are still dirty."

This article was edited for content and space. To read the entire selection, please visit www.progressivegrocer.com

FRESH

TOMATOES

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS!

March 25-26, 2020- postponed

PMA Fresh Connections- Philadelphia, PA
www.centerforgrowingtalent.org

April 26-28, 2020- postponed

Women's Fresh Perspectives-San Antonio, TX
www.centerforgrowingtalent.org

April 30-May 2, 2020- postponed; potential cancel

Viva Fresh- San Antonio, TX
www.vivafreshexpo.com

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