



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: With South Florida tomato crops still going strong and Palmetto/Ruskin growers gradually adding to the mix, the East has robust supply available, particularly on rounds and grapes. With near-perfect growing weather while crops matured, quality is excellent. The sizing profile is definitely on the larger end of the spectrum for rounds, with 6x6's and 6x7's on the shy side. A variety of sizing options is available on grape tomatoes, as growers harvest from varied stages of the harvest process. With a smooth transition from South Florida to the Ruskin area on tap, overall tomato supply should remain strong for the next several weeks.

West Mexico expects to continue with good supplies of rounds through April, then begin a gradual decline in May. New roma crops in northern areas will be strong through May before tapering off in June. Meanwhile, Baja has started in a light way with grape and roma tomatoes and will add rounds in mid-May.

Bell Peppers: Bell pepper volumes are moderate in South Florida. Fruit has matured quickly, which has pressured harvest schedules and caused a little color to show up in packs. There's also some light wind-scarring as most growing areas have experienced wind and weather in the past few weeks. However, with proper grading and sorting, there is ample product available to meet retail needs. The West now has supply available from both the California desert and Mexico. Pepper production is on the upswing in California as more growers add to the mix this week and next. Mexico has decent numbers, but will start battling the heat from now until the end of the season at the end of May. Quality is still nice but will likely change with the weather. California's quality is excellent with good color, strong walls, and nice shape.

Cucumbers: Florida cucumber crops that were in good production have

been slowed a little by weather, but new crops will come online next week, improving this week's lighter fruit volumes. With weather affecting fruit quality somewhat, look for a lot of offgrades and lighter numbers on retail-quality fruit. The West is looking to Mexico for cucumbers, where the majority of production has transitioned from Sinaloa to Sonora. Quality and shelf life are strong on this new fruit. Baja has also started up and should see volume increases over the next 7-10 days.

Summer Squash: While Homestead farms are on the way out of squash crops, Plant City continues to build volume and South Florida is in a steady production mode. Rain and wind have plagued most growing areas, so there is a variety of quality with scarring and scuffing being the most prevalent issue. Northern Mexico continues to have promotable volumes of yellow and zucchini squash available with nice quality.

Green Beans: Green bean production is gradually declining out of Mexico as growers finish up for the season. The California desert has started in a light way, with more growers getting underway over the next 7-10 days. Eastern farms continue to have an abundance of beans this week, but we could see supply lighten up in the near future due to rains and skips in harvests.

Eggplant: Florida has steady, but not heavy, eggplant supply. March weather stressed plants, which has lightened yields from expected. Good quality is available but in short supply, as much of the fruit has weather-affected skins. Mexico will continue to provide a steady supply of eggplant through the month. The California desert is on tap to start in a few weeks so we're looking for a smooth transition to new growing areas.

Chili Peppers: Chili production continues to transition in Mexico. Older growing areas will be heating up which will have a negative effect on quality. However, Baja has started in a small way and has very nice fruit.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*Holding steady, the National Diesel Average remained at \$3.04 per gallon this week.

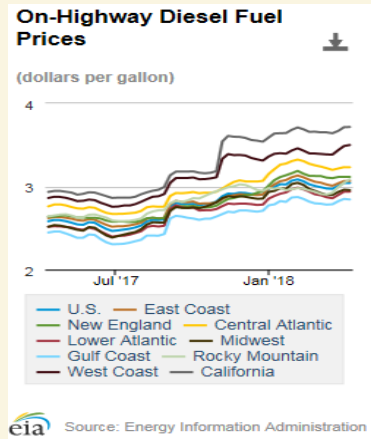
* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.46 higher than the same time last year.

* Most areas of the country reported slight fuel increases or decreases of less than \$.01 per gallon. The exceptions were the Rocky Mountains and West Coast, where prices increased \$.04 and \$.02, respectively.

*California maintains its role as the high price leader for diesel at \$3.72 per gallon while the Gulf Coast region offers the lowest price at \$2.84 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price rose an even \$2.00 per barrel this week, moving from \$63.51 to \$65.51.

* Trucks are short in California shipping areas and at the Mexico-Nogales border this week. Other harvest areas report adequate levels of transportation available.



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AN APPLE A DAY

Nutrition: Phone Apps Can Help You at the Grocery Store

By: Bonnie Brost, www.duluthnewstribune.com, April 10, 2018

Food shopping can be confusing.

More than 20,000 new products are introduced into grocery stores every year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These products come in eye-catching wrappers and offer health claims to entice us to buy.

How can we eat well when we have limited time and are bombarded with so many new items? I often get questions about which product is better to buy and why. Keeping up with new products is one task, but then we need to consider nutritional components. What is more important to watch: fats, carbs, protein, sodium, vitamins, minerals or fiber?

I suggest trying a smartphone app to put help in the palm of your hand. Among the ones to consider are Fooducate, Shopwell, EWG (Environmental Working Group) and FoodFacts. They can help you make healthier choices because they're designed to sort through nutritional information and they rate less processed foods higher than more processed foods.

Let's look at Fooducate, an app that I like because it uses grading algorithms developed by dietitians and nutrition professionals.

To begin, you simply scan a product's barcode or type in a product's name or product

category. Then you get a grade, from D (lowest) to A. There are also tabs that explain the rating and offer alternatives that rate higher.

Fooducate divides products into categories, such as breakfast cereal, yogurt, bread and fruits. In each category, the app looks at the most relevant nutrients and ingredients and gives them more weight compared to others. For example, fiber is a very important in breads and cereals but not expected in yogurt.

Fooducate's grades are based on the concept of nutrient density. The more nutrient dense a food is, the better it is for you. The algorithms consider the product's nutrition facts panel, the ingredients listed and the product category. It adds points for nutrients such as fiber, calcium and iron. It deducts points for saturated fat, sodium and sugar.

A product's ingredient list is very important because it tells the story behind the nutrients. Imagine a piece of cardboard sprayed with 11 vitamins and minerals, then coated with "natural" flavors, peppered with an artificial sweetener, and colored with Red #40. Under some rating systems, this product would score very high as it has zero calories and is full of nutrients. Not so with Fooducate, which looks for real ingredients and adds points for the use of whole

foods.

Some categories have products that span the entire range of grades. Others span a smaller range. For example, fruits can rate between a B+ to an A while sweetened carbonated soft drinks go from D to D+ and popcorn rates a C to an A-.

Highly processed foods rate lower than products prepared at home with less processed ingredients. Fooducate's algorithms also look for nutrients that come from real ingredients rather fortifications. A red bell pepper that naturally contains high levels of vitamin C rates higher than a product with ascorbic acid added to reach 100 percent of the daily value of vitamin C.

Try an app to see how your food choices rate. I recommend choosing foods that have an A or B rating on Fooducate to get the best health bang for your buck.

Bonnie Brost is a licensed and registered dietitian in the Wellness Program at the Essentia Health St. Mary's Heart & Vascular Center in Duluth. Contact her at bonnie.brost@essentiahealth.org.



Lipman on Location- Portland

Formerly known Coastal Produce, Lipman Family Farms acquired the company and brought it into a different level of freshness. Based in Portland, Oregon, we are capable of serving the Pacific Northwest region, including the Alaska.

In 2016, Lipman Portland opened a state of the art facility, giving us the ability to continue expansion of our product portfolio, as well as increase our customers' satisfaction. Most of our customers have been with us for decades, as have many of our employees. Diversity has strengthened our company because we want to make sure everyone is treated with mutual respect. At Lipman Portland, we serve fresh, we serve local, we serve delicious!!!



PRODUCE BAROMETER

| ITEM | QUALITY | PRICING |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Bell Pepper | Varied | Lower |
| Cucumber | Good | Steady |
| Eggplant | Good | Steady |
| Green Beans | Good | Steady |
| Jalapenos | Good | Steady |
| Onions | Good | Steady |
| Squash | Varied | Steady |
| Tomatoes | Very Good | Steady |



APRIL CALENDAR

- April-All Month**
- National BLT Sandwich Month
- April 15th-22nd**
- National Volunteer Week
- April 16th**
- National Bean Counter Day
- April 17th**
- National Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day
- April 19th**
- Get to Know Your Customers Day

Ruskin, FL Weather

| Fri Apr 13 | Sat Apr 14 | Sun Apr 15 | Mon Apr 16 | Tue Apr 17 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | |
| 84° F | 87° F | 83° F | 73° F | 78° F |
| 69° F | 72° F | 62° F | 60° F | 61° F |
| ESE 11 MPH | ESE 10 MPH | SSE 22 MPH | NW 15 MPH | N 8 MPH |
| | | Precip 70% | | |

NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

Grocery Shoppers Demand Digital

By: Russell Redman, www.supermarketnews.com, April 9, 2018

Grocery shoppers have come to rely on digital channels and now expect online access in their path to purchase, a study by consumer target marketing firm SKULocal finds.

Forty-three percent of shoppers have subscribed to receive home delivery of grocery products, and 47% have done so for beauty and personal care products, according to SKULocal's report "The Convenience Dynamic: How Digital Shopping Is Shifting the Grocery Ecosystem."

"Brands and grocery retailers can no longer afford to ignore e-commerce. While some adoption rates remain low and not all categories have shifted fully online, e-commerce now represents the opportunity for significant market share which must be considered in the strategic planning process," St. Petersburg, Fla.-based SKULocal said in the report. "While accommodating the shift may be a challenge, it also presents a host of opportunities."

Price plays a key role in swaying consumers to buy online rather than in-store. Of digital grocery shoppers, 52% think they find better prices online for groceries, health and beauty aids, over-the-counter health products and pet supplies, SKULocal said. Just 28% believe they'll get better prices by going to the store.

"It's imperative that brands and retailers alike become very strategic on which product categories to feature and push online, and analyze which products drive more in-store sales conversions," SKULocal noted in the report.

For example, although Millennial shoppers are digitally native and have embraced online grocery delivery faster than other consumers, they're also the most likely to switch channels to get what they want. SKULocal's research found that 56% of Millennials tend to buy natural and organic foods in-store. What's more, only 16% have used digital channels to purchase healthier foods.

Purchases of center store and general merchandise have moved online the fastest, while HBA, OTC, and fresh and frozen foods are migrating more slowly, SKULocal reported. Yet private label presents a sizable opportunity for brands and retailers in the digital realm. The study found that 77% of consumers have considered buying private label products online when shopping for grocery, HBA, pet care and OTC items.

"Shoppers revealed that low brand affinity is one of the main influences to consider private-label brands when shopping for high-margin grocery categories," SKULocal's report said in explaining how private label is capturing strong e-commerce share.

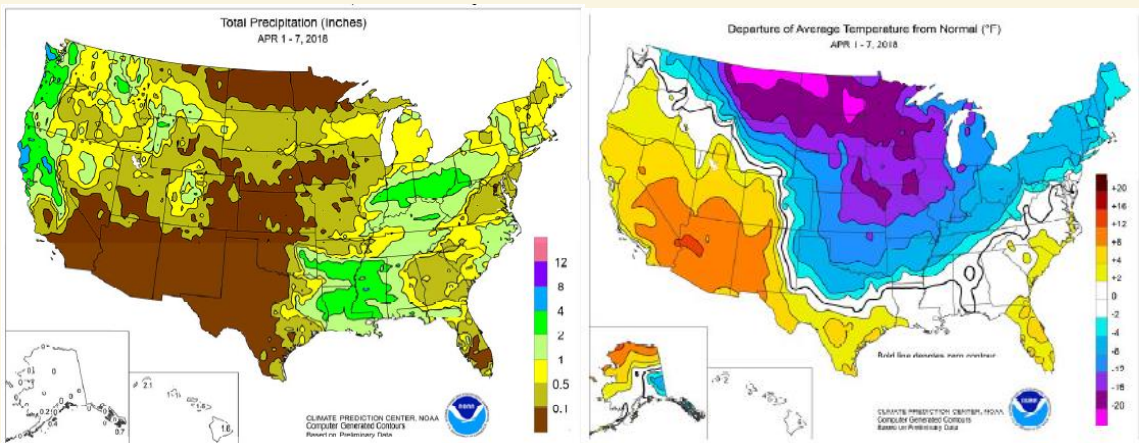
Over the next 10 years, online grocery shopping stands to reach market saturation, accounting for over a fifth of grocery spend. That means marketers must get a better handle on where targeted shoppers are buying various product categories and why they're using those channels, according to SKULocal.

"Shoppers aren't just omnichannel in terms of how they're exposed to marketing; they're omnishoppers that fluidly move between each channel to make the purchases that meet their needs," the report said.

"Marketers must approach them holistically if they want to capture the right touchpoints and influence them to become repeat shoppers or loyal customers."

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Digital Ordering Helps Drive Double-Digit Growth in Foodservice Delivery

www.csnews.com, April 6, 2018

Foodservice delivery posted sizable gains in both visits and sales over the last five years, despite overall weakness in the U.S. restaurant industry, according to The NPD Group.

The market researcher found that the 20-percent increase in delivery sales and 10-percent gain in delivery foodservice visits were supported in large part by the growth of digital ordering, which currently represents more than half of all delivery visits.

"Delivery has become a need to have and no longer a nice to have in the restaurant industry," said Warren Solochek, senior vice president, industry relations for NPD. "Restaurants need delivery in today's environment in order to gain and maintain share. It has become a consumer expectation."

Today's consumers are so accustomed to ordering delivery that they are ordering it as breakfast and lunch as well as dinner, which has historically been the most popular daypart for delivery, according to *Future of Foodservice Snapshot: Restaurant Delivery*, a new study from NPD. Growth of delivery at dinner has remained flat over the last five years, but grown at breakfast and lunch.

While digital ordering is a major contributor to the growth of foodservice delivery, using the phone to order still represents nearly half (49 percent) of delivery visits, NPD noted.

Third-party delivery services such as Uber Eats, Grubhub and DoorDash account for much of the digital delivery growth. However, the share of digital delivery by third-party services is more than double among full-service restaurants than quick-service outlets.

"Convenience is among the chief reasons why consumers visit restaurants and delivery brings a heightened level of it," Solochek said. "We forecast that delivery will grow over the next five years and the growth will source to non-traditional delivery outlets and dayparts."

FRESH
TOMATOES

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of nature™

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
PACK YOUR BAGS!

May 11-12, 2018

The Packer's West Coast Produce Expo
JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa
Palm Desert, CA
www.westcoastproduceexpo.com

June 13-15, 2018

United Fresh Convention
West Hall- McCormick Place
Chicago, IL
www.unitedfreshshow.org

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