



**MARKET UPDATE**

**Tomatoes:** South Florida still has plenty of round tomatoes, but should begin to slow down as Palmetto/Ruskin builds volume over the next few weeks. With great weather and most growers harvesting crown picks, quality has been very nice. Romas and grapes are following the same transition pattern and, like rounds, should remain plentiful for at least the next three weeks.

The West is also looking for a smooth transition this season. West Mexico expects solid round tomato numbers through April, but will then begin a slow tapering off through the month of May. The California desert and Baja will step in around May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup>, respectively. The majority of roma tomato volume is currently coming from northern areas of Mainland Mexico, but Baja has started and will be building volumes over the next few weeks.

**Bell Peppers:** Florida bell pepper volumes have been steady but there are some quality challenges (bruising and scarring) that are the result of a cold front that passed through growing areas previously. South Florida will begin to slow down at the end of next week. Plant City growers have started in a very light way and should build a little steam over the next 10-14 days. Western markets can find nice quality fruit from both Mexico and California this week.

**Cucumbers:** Florida cucumber volumes are light this week as weather issues have reduced yields and packouts. Winds have caused sunken areas and scarring on some fruit, limiting the #1 product available. New fields are on tap to start this weekend, which should strengthen Eastern supply next week. In Mexico, Sinaloa is headed toward the finish line, shifting the primary production area to Sonora where quality and condition have been good. There are also a few growers up and running in Baja.

**Summer Squash:** Northern Mexico

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has hit a light spot in squash production due to cool evening temperatures and excessive winds but should see more volume as weather patterns improve over the next 7-10 days. Eastern supply is also snug on yellow, as Florida growers walked away from older fields because of poor quality and are experiencing a slight gap until new fields begin. Zucchini volumes and quality are better than yellow, with only some minor scarring concerns. Georgia has started in a very light way and should begin to build volumes soon.

**Green Beans:** After weeks of abundant supply, Florida green beans have tightened up as cool weather and rains have affected yields and quality. Western markets are transitioning from Mexico to the California desert and are lighter in supply than recent weeks.

**Eggplant:** Central Florida has light volumes of eggplant, just enough to keep the market satisfied. Quality is just okay with some reports of brown calyx. Mexican growers are beginning to wind down eggplant crops and should finish up toward the end of the month. The California desert will get underway next week, hopefully bridging a smooth transition for the West.

**Chili Peppers:** Mexican chili pepper production is starting to feel the effects of weather in some regions and older fields in other areas. Quality is definitely a concern, but Baja and Chihuahua have just started new crops and have very much better quality. Florida farms have good volumes of jalapenos but limited amounts of other varieties.

**Hard Squash:** Mexico's acorn and spaghetti squash are readily available, but butternut continues to be a struggle. Growers are getting off to a late start due to weather and have less acreage planted, so things could remain interesting for the immediate future. Spring Florida crops have begun with very light volumes and a mixture of quality.

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**TRANSPORTATION FACTS**

\*After holding steady last week, the national average diesel fuel price jumped \$.06 per gallon this week, coming in at \$3.10 per gallon.

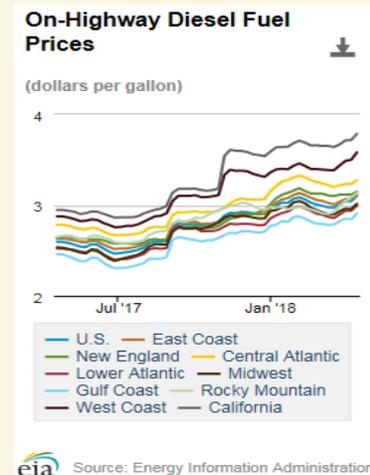
\* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.51 higher than the same time last year.

\* Every area in the country reported price hikes with the most notable from the West Coast, where the price rose \$.10 per gallon.

\*California maintains its role as the high price leader for diesel at \$3.79 per gallon while the Gulf Coast region offers the lowest price at \$2.91 per gallon.

\*The WTI Crude Oil price rose another 1.5% this week, moving from \$65.51 to \$66.52 per barrel.

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



## AN APPLE A DAY

### Raw Fruits and Vegetables Provide Better Mental Health Outcomes: Otago Research

By: Kate Brookie, [www.otago.ac.nz/news](http://www.otago.ac.nz/news), April 16, 2018

Seeking the feel good factor?  
Go natural.

That is the simple message from University of Otago researchers who have discovered raw fruit and vegetables may be better for your mental health than cooked, canned and processed fruit and vegetables.

Lead author Psychology PhD student Kate Brookie, says public health campaigns have historically focused on aspects of quantity for the consumption of fruit and vegetables (such as 5+ a day).

However, the study, conducted by Ms Brookie and co-authors Psychology Senior Lecturer Dr Tamlin Conner and postgraduate honours student Georgia Best, just published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, found that for mental health in particular, it may also be important to consider the way in which produce was prepared and consumed.

“Our research has highlighted that the consumption of fruit and vegetables in their ‘unmodified’ state is more strongly associated with better mental health compared to cooked/canned/processed fruit and vegetables,” Ms Brookie says.

Dr Conner believes this could be because the cooking and

processing of fruit and vegetables has the potential to diminish nutrient levels.

“This likely limits the delivery of nutrients that are essential for optimal emotional functioning,” she says.

For the study, more than 400 young adults from New Zealand and the United States aged 18 to 25 were surveyed. This age group was chosen as young adults typically have the lowest fruit and vegetable consumption of all age groups and are at high risk for mental health disorders.

The group’s typical consumption of raw versus cooked and processed fruits and vegetables were assessed, alongside their negative and positive mental health, and lifestyle and demographic variables that could affect the association between fruit and vegetable intake and mental health (such as exercise, sleep, unhealthy diet, chronic health conditions, socioeconomic status,

ethnicity, and gender).

“Controlling for the covariates, raw fruit and vegetable consumption predicted lower levels of mental illness symptomatology, such as depression, and improved levels of psychological well-being including positive mood, life satisfaction and flourishing. These mental health benefits were significantly reduced for cooked, canned, and processed fruits and vegetables.

“This research is increasingly vital as lifestyle approaches such as dietary change may provide an accessible, safe, and adjuvant approach to improving mental health,” Dr Conner says.

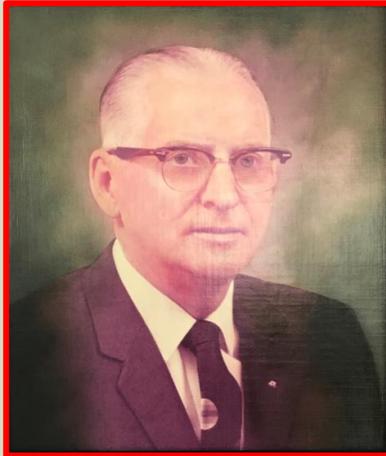
\* The top 10 raw foods related to better mental health were: carrots, bananas, apples, dark leafy greens such as spinach, grapefruit, lettuce, citrus fruits, fresh berries, cucumber, and kiwifruit.



## Lipman on Location- Dallas

As a traveling produce salesman, J.C. Combs quickly saw a need for tomato repacking in the Dallas/Ft Worth area. In 1958, he opened the doors to Combs Produce. Over the next 60 years, the operation has expanded to offer a full line of fresh whole and value added produce that services customers covering 8 states.

In 2012, Combs Produce was acquired by Lipman Family Farms and opened a 160,000 sq ft building suited with a 35,000 sq ft repacking room, better known as the “crown jewel”. With this spacious repacking operation, Lipman Texas is able to customize private packaging to fit consumer trends and demands. Additionally, our processing capabilities and offerings are continuously expanding to support our customers’ full market basket needs 24/7/365.



J.C. Combs



### PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



### APRIL CALENDAR

**April-All Month**  
 Stress Awareness Month  
**April 22<sup>nd</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup>**  
 Administrative Professionals Week  
**April 20<sup>th</sup>**  
 National Lima Bean Respect Day  
**April 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
 National Picnic Day  
**April 25<sup>th</sup>**  
 National Zucchini Bread Day

### Ruskin, FL Weather

Fri Apr 20	Sat Apr 21	Sun Apr 22	Mon Apr 23	Tue Apr 24
83° F	84° F	85° F	83° F	81° F
68° F	69° F	70° F	69° F	67° F
NE 8 MPH	E 13 MPH	E 13 MPH	SSE 13 MPH	E 10 MPH
		Precip 50%	Precip 60%	Precip 20%

## KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

### Why Grocers Need to Act Like Restaurants

By: Gina Acosta, [www.retailleader.com](http://www.retailleader.com), April 12, 2018

Just like restaurants, food retailers should be thinking about offering foodservice delivery as a way to overcome stagnating customer traffic.

Despite the overall weakness in the U.S. restaurant industry, foodservice delivery posted sizable gains in both visits and sales over the last five years, reports The NPD Group. The 20% increase in delivery sales and 10% gain in delivery foodservice visits were supported in large part by the growth of digital ordering, which now represents over half of all delivery visits.

“Delivery has become a need to have and no longer a nice to have in the restaurant industry,” says Warren Solochek, senior vice president, industry relations. “Restaurants need delivery in today’s environment in order to gain and maintain share. It has become a consumer expectation.”

Consumers are so accustomed to ordering delivery that they are ordering it at breakfast and lunch in addition to dinner, which historically has been the most popular daypart to order it, according to NPD’s new study, Future of Foodservice Snapshot: Restaurant Delivery. Growth of delivery at dinner has remained flat over the last five years and has grown at breakfast and lunch.

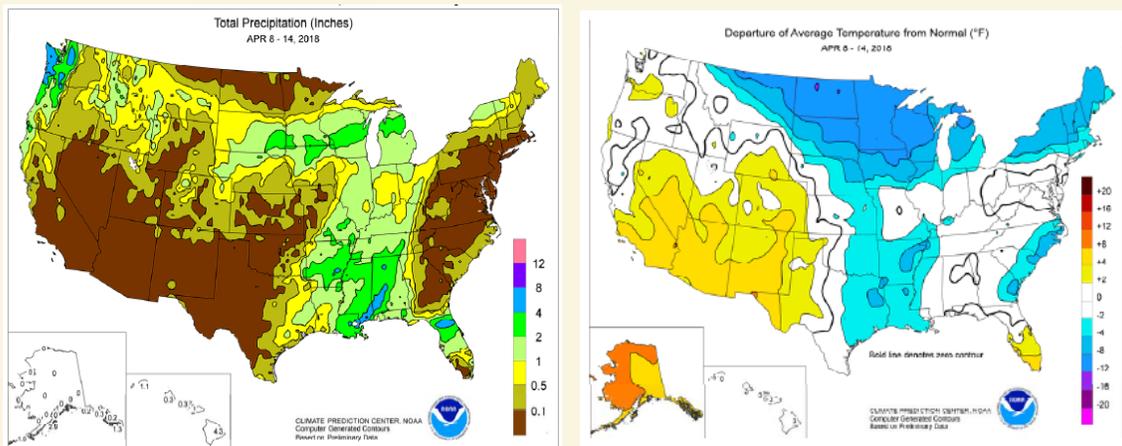
The report’s conclusions reinforce the shifting trends in consumer behavior as the ease of online shopping and meal delivery have taken a bigger bite out of retail sales. Retailers looking to grab back some of this share should be offering delivery of hot and cold prepared foods to customers. It’s not just laundry detergent or canned tomatoes that shoppers are looking for via online delivery. They also want the grocery store to act like a restaurant. They want to be able to place an order the way they would from a restaurant: a hot, restaurant-style meal for a family of four.

Although digital ordering is a major contributor to the growth of foodservice delivery, using the phone to order still represents 49 percent of delivery visits. Third party delivery services, like UberEats, 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, finds NPD’s restaurant industry trends.

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

## NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

### Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



## NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

### The Early Morning Produce Walk

By: Armand Lobato, [www.thepacker.com](http://www.thepacker.com), April 18, 2018

Greek philosopher Plato once said, "The beginning is the most important part of any work." This is true for deep thinking, and it's equally important for a produce manager.

Visualize the scene: It's so early when most produce people go to work it is still dark outside. Traffic is just beginning to build volume. The coffee pot hisses and steams in the backroom as night stockers wrap up their duties and the opening produce clerk is hustling to finish setting the wet rack before the store opens for business. Just another day. However, for the produce manager this is that all-important beginning time slot.

A wise produce manager is careful to avoid the temptation of getting sidetracked with one particular project, or picking up the clipboard to write an order right off the bat. This is a time for assessing the whole day's outlook, as it will set the tempo for the workload to follow.

I always liked to get a cart with a few empty boxes, grab a few cleaning towels, a legal pad and sharp pencil to begin. Then I'd walk the entire produce department, one fixture, one refrigerated case at time. As I walked, I'd get my hands on each display, straightening and culling as I walked, taking care to not spend too much time on any one spot.

Rather, if something needed extra attention, I'd make notes under a few headings: "areas to clean," "rotation needs," "merchandising changes" and "notes." Of course, whatever I could do quickly (such as wiping off spills on table edges or scale pans) I'd knock out as I walked around in that early morning hour. This was a good time to fix little things that my closer missed, adjusting signs, replacing plastic bags — anything what I thought might detracted from the department's early image.

With my early morning notes posted, my crew arrived for their shifts and were likewise trained to follow the daily plan. It was everyone's responsibility to take care of whatever specific tasks fell in their work area.

Besides stocking, as displays got rotated, scrubbed, merchandising changes were made, and so on, each line item was dutifully scratched off the list. There's something especially satisfying for all of us to-do list makers, to check off each task. It's a sense of accomplishment. Even therapeutic.

The beginning early morning walk is important. It's so easy to feel overwhelmed (especially walking into a mess), and to divert attention that makes a produce manager feel out of control and frustrated. Even in the worst of situations, following the planning routine and taking notes as you make assessments will help keep everything on track.

And the beginning of the day is the best time to do so.

FRESH
TOMATOES

the best  
of nature™

MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
PACK YOUR BAGS!

May 2-3, 2018

PMA Tech Knowledge  
Monterey Conference Center  
Monterey, CA  
[www.pma.com/events/tech-knowledge](http://www.pma.com/events/tech-knowledge)

August 22-23, 2018

NEPC Produce, Floral & Foodservice Expo  
Hynes Convention Center  
Boston, MA  
[www.newenglandproduceecouncil.com](http://www.newenglandproduceecouncil.com)

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