



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Florida farms are into good round tomato volumes now, with most growers running product daily. The size profile was on the small side last week but seems to be on the rise now as more get into new fields. Quality is very good. Roma numbers are light, but there are several growers with some product available. South Florida's grape tomatoes have finally come on strong and they are plentiful.

Round, roma, and grape tomato volumes are all strong out of Western Mexico this week as many growers/crops near peak production. The full range of sizing is available and quality is good. Baja and Eastern Mexico are down to a trickle and should wrap things up in the next few weeks.

Bell Peppers: Florida farms have been packing light to moderate volumes of nice-quality bell peppers. There's a good amount of big fruit available, but choice product is on the short side. Crops are on the verge of volume increases, but cool temps the next few days may slow that down. Mexico's pepper game is strong, with all growers going in Sonora and Sinaloa. Quality and supply are great with all pack sizes and styles available daily.

Cucumbers: Honduran cucumber volume picked up slightly this week as growers moved deeper into their plantings. Overall quality has been okay, but there have been reports of problem lots. Mexico's production increased over the past week as ideal growing conditions brought volume on. There have been no quality issues and product has good shelf life.

Summer Squash: Although production is lighter due to the last cold weather event where some acreage was lost, light demand has kept squash availability at acceptable levels in the East. Good quality availability is another story. Both

yellow and zucchini have wind scarring challenges with yellow having the most concerns. Look for Eastern squash to remain status quo until a sustainable pattern of warm weather settles in. With four active growing areas and new growers coming online, Mexico's yellow and zucchini squash volumes are increasing.

Green Beans: Cold weather has definitely slowed bean production in South Florida. Volume and yields remain very light this week as crops continue to recover from winter-like temperatures. Nogales expects to see a slight increase in bean crossings over the next 7-10 days, but any additional volume will be picked up quickly from bean-hungry Eastern markets.

Eggplant: Mexico farms are offering a steady supply of eggplant as growers smoothly transition from older to newer fields. Fruit remains solid and firm in condition. Since eggplant thrives in warm weather and Florida has been in short supply of heat units, Eastern supply on eggplant is tight. Overall quality has been good on the fruit that is available though. This item needs warm weather to ramp up production.

Hard Squash: A few Honduran shippers have started butternut crops in a very light way and should add spaghetti over the next few weeks. (Honduran shippers generally do not grow significant amounts of acorn.) Otherwise, Eastern hard squash is primarily a Mexico mixer deal. Mexico's supply is a bit snug but a new wave of product is coming on as farms get into new plantings. Overall quality is great despite a little scarring on spaghetti.

Chili Peppers: Chili pepper volumes keep coming from Sonora and Sinaloa! With an array of sizes available, both regions are offering value peppers all the way to premium sizing. Although each area has a few problem spots, overall quality is good.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*The National Diesel Average is still on the rise, coming in at \$3.03 per gallon, up \$.03 over last week's price.

* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.44 higher than the same time last year.

* Prices rose in all reporting areas with the most significant jump in the Central Atlantic area (up \$.05 per gallon).

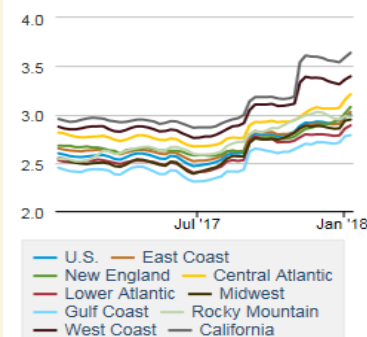
*California maintains its role as the high price leader for diesel fuel at \$3.64 while the Gulf Coast region continues to offer the best bargain at \$2.83 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price rose 1.6% this week, moving from \$62.96 to \$63.97 per barrel.

*Transportation continues to be a challenge in most parts of the country, although reports indicate adequate levels of availability in Florida.

On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices

(dollars per gallon)



cia Source: Energy Information Administration

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AN APPLE A DAY

Americans are Planning to Avoid Sugar and Eat More Sustainably in 2018

www.blog.labelinsight.com, January 4, 2018

Label Insight, the market leader for product transparency, today released the results from a national consumer survey of 1,023 Americans conducted by Wakefield Research on eating habits in 2018. The survey found that most (67 percent) Americans will be prioritizing healthy or socially-conscious food purchases in 2018. Their primary point of emphasis is cutting back on sugars, with nearly half of consumers (47 percent) planning to eat less sugar or buy more 'no sugar added' products this year. The next most prominent purchase factors are: emphasizing natural ingredient purchases, such as those with 'no artificial colors or flavors' (37 percent) and shopping for more sustainable products and ingredients (22 percent).

Shaking the Sugar Habit

Baby Boomers and women are by far the most likely to simmer down the sweetness, with 53 percent of Boomers planning to cut down on sugary foods compared to only 40 percent of Millennials. More than half (52 percent) of women will be looking to reduce their sugar intake, while only 41 percent of men feel the same.

Shopping Sustainably

When it comes to shopping with a social consciousness in 2018, men are particularly keen on knowing that the food they chose is sustainable, with 26 percent spotlighting sustainability in their food choices compared to only 19 percent of women. Millennials are also

emphasizing sustainability more than older generations, 26 percent compared to 17 percent of Gen Xers.

Diet Decisions

For many Americans, maintaining healthy or socially-conscious eating habits will mean choosing a gluten-free, vegan, ketogenic or Paleo diet to serve as a guide, but these methods are not equally appreciated among the generations. In fact, 1 in 5 (20 percent) Millennials report they are likely to follow one of these diets in 2018, while only slightly more than 1 in 10 (11 percent) of Baby Boomers expect to do likewise. While Baby Boomers lead the pack when it comes to cutting out sugar, they may be less eager to follow the stricter rules of these popular diets.

Improve Label Transparency

To help them better understand what's in the products they use and consume, Americans want better-defined and more transparent food labels. Indeed, the primary change consumers want to see from food brands and retailers is product labels that provide information they can better understand in 2018 (25 percent). The next most pressing need is greater transparency into ingredients (14 percent) and easier-to-identify 'clean' or minimally processed products (14 percent).

"It is no surprise that the

majority of consumers are asking brands and retailers to provide more insight and clarity about their products," said Patrick Moorhead, chief marketing officer at Label Insight. "With so many Americans seeking healthy and socially-conscious food, knowing what is in it and how it is processed is a more important selling point now than ever. The fact is brands and retailers who want to retain or gain market share will need to comply with these consumer demands or risk being left behind."

While everyone is eager to get a better line of sight into the food they eat, Millennials and Baby Boomers are in two different aisles when it comes to what they most want from brands and retailers in 2018. Baby Boomers (33 percent) are more than twice as likely as Millennials (15 percent) to prioritize wanting product labels that provided information they can better understand as the top priority, while Millennials (17 percent) are nearly twice as likely as Baby Boomers (9 percent) to point to more organic food and product options as the most important change brands and retailers could make.

This online survey of 1,023 nationally representative U.S. adults, ages 18+, was conducted by Wakefield Research in December 2017.

Veggie of the Week- Eggplant

Maturity Indices

Eggplant fruit are harvested at a range of developmental stages. Depending on cultivar and temperature, the time from flowering to harvest may be 10 to 40 days. Generally fruit are harvested immature before seeds begin to significantly enlarge and harden. Firmness and external glossiness are also indicators of a pre-maturity condition. Eggplant fruit become pithy and bitter as they reach an overmature condition.

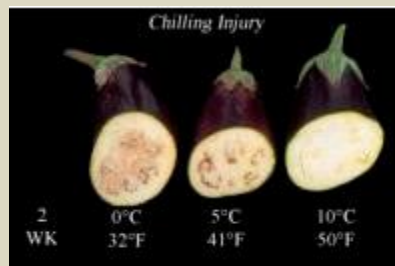
Quality Indices

The diversity of eggplant types being marketed has increased greatly in recent years. Standard (American) eggplant quality is primarily based on uniform egg to globular shape, firmness and a dark purple skin color. Additional quality indices are size, freedom from growth or handling defects, freedom from decay, and a fresh green calyx. U.S. grades are Fancy, No. 1, and No. 2, and No. 3. Distinction among grades is based solely on size, external appearances, and firmness.

Optimum Temperature

10-12°C (50-54°F) Storage of eggplant is generally less than 14 days as visual and sensory qualities deteriorate rapidly. Decay is likely to increase following storage beyond two weeks, especially after removal to typical retail conditions. Short term storage or transit temperatures below this range are used often to reduce weight loss, but will result in chilling injury after several days.

Eggplant fruit are chilling sensitive at temperatures below 10°C (50°F). At 5°C (41°F) chilling injury will occur in 6-8 days. Consequences of chilling injury are pitting, surface bronzing, and browning of seeds and pulp tissue. Accelerated decay by *Alternaria* spp. is common in chilling stressed fruit. Chilling injury is cumulative and may be initiated in the field prior to harvest.



Suslow, T. and Cantwell, M. 1997. Eggplant: Recommendations for Maintaining Postharvest Quality. http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Commodity_Resources/Fact_Sheets/Datastores/Vegetables_English/?uid=&ds=799

PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



JANUARY CALENDAR

All Month

National Fat Free Living Month

January 22nd - 26th

Clean Out Your Inbox Week

January 22nd

National Southern Food Day

January 24th

National Compliment Day

January 26th

Fun at Work Day

Estero, FL Weather

Fri Jan 19	Sat Jan 20	Sun Jan 21	Mon Jan 22	Tue Jan 23
67°F	73°F	77°F	79°F	77°F
51°F	57°F	60°F	61°F	60°F
NNE 8 MPH	NE 8 MPH	ENE 9 MPH	E 8 MPH	NNE 8 MPH
		Precip 20%	Precip 20%	

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

How Retailers Get It Wrong on Promotions

By: Gina Acosta, www.retailleader.com, January 16, 2017

Retailers are offering the wrong promotions to the wrong customers at the wrong time, according to a new study.

At a time when retailers are struggling against increasing competition and rising costs, 52% of the weekly or monthly promotions they offer go to customers who would happily have paid full price, according to a new Revionics survey conducted by Forrester Consulting.

The study explored shoppers' behaviors and experiences with retail pricing and promotions, yielding some startling insights. It also pointed to some compelling imperatives for retailers to succeed in today's hyper-competitive environment.

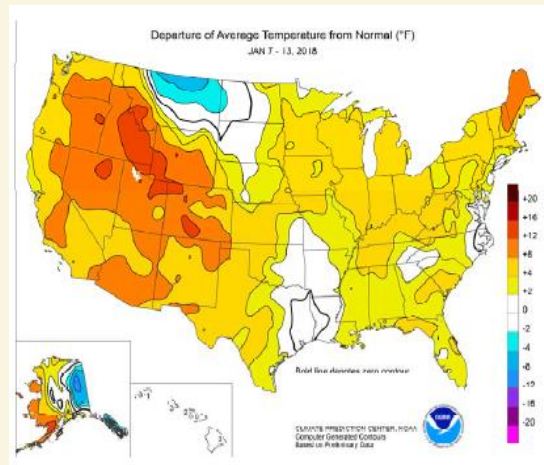
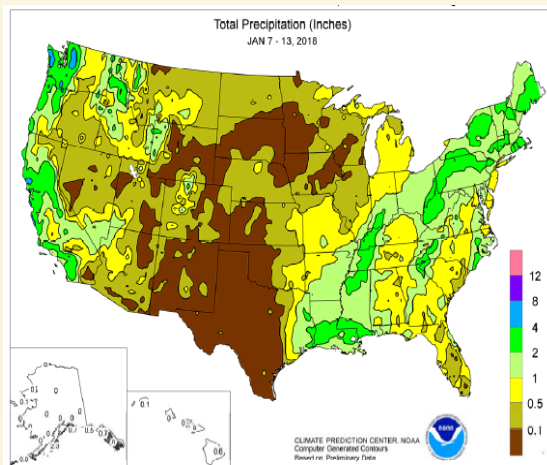
The survey, which questioned consumers in the U.S., United Kingdom, France, Germany and Brazil, also debunks retailers' hope of recouping margins by raising prices on limited-stock items. When asked how they would react if an item they wanted was available at a higher-than-expected price, nearly 60% of respondents said they would wait, not purchase the item at all, purchase it from a different retailer. A retailer seeking short-term gain faces the painful risk of losing sales and the hard-won loyalty of its shoppers.

For retailers, using science-based pricing and promotions to meet customers' expectations and provide relevant offers when and where they matter is key to both shopper satisfaction and long-term business health. As the study notes, "These incessant and poorly targeted promotions create a climate of perpetual abundance and undermine the customers' sense of urgency to buy. Instead of wasting money and resources on indiscriminate campaigns, retailers should focus on personalized and timely promotions." It continues: "Retailers should use customer insights and data science to design the promotions that are most appropriate for different groups of customers in context."

Revionics Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer Cheryl Sullivan sees a profound market shift as data science-based pricing and promotions change from "nice-to-haves" to now being "must-haves". "This confirms what we found in the earlier study: that today's shoppers worldwide are incredibly savvy and discerning," Sullivan said. "Retailers who want to effectively reach their customers with meaningful prices and promotions must embrace a science-based approach now if they want to remain relevant and competitive," Sullivan said.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

The Newest Delivery Service: A Self-Driving “Bodega on Wheels”

By: Deena M. Amato-McCoy, www.chainstoreage.com, January 11, 2018

Grocery chains will soon have a new way to get fresh produce into the hands of its time-starved shoppers. Startup Robomart introduced a self-driving, nearly fully autonomous grocery store on wheels. The rolling robot is designed to bring fruits, vegetables, and other perishable items from the supermarket aisle to customers' doors, according to *Business Insider*.

The concept relies on a Sprinter van-sized delivery vehicle that is refrigerated, and features multiple shelves that will be used to display various types of produce, *Business Insider* revealed. (It can also be designed with a heating system.)

The rolling robot is outfitted with LiDAR — a detection system that uses radar, and light from a laser, cameras, a motion control system, and route planning and obstacle avoidance software. The vehicle can cover an estimated 80-mile range at 25 miles per hour. They are also equipped with a wireless charging system, according to *Engadget*.

Here's how it works: Shoppers use an app to “order” the vehicle — a concept similar to a ride sharing service. Once it arrives at their home, the shopper unlocks and opens the vehicle's door, then makes their selection. A proprietary “grab and go” checkout system tracks which products are removed from the vehicle, then automatically bills the shopper's account and generates an online receipt, *Engadget* explained.

The concept, which debuted at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this week, is expected to begin cruising neighborhoods in the Bay Area during a pilot program this summer, the report added.

Robomart founder Ali Ahmed, expects the concept to appeal to a collective of local stores that could use the vehicle to compete with big-box retailers. It also could appeal to wholesalers eager to directly connect with consumers, according to *TechCrunch*.

For now however, the vehicles could give on-demand delivery services a run for their money. Supermarket chains could license the platform and robots for a two-year lease — a much cheaper options than opening a new store, *Business Insider* added. Delivery fees also go into the retailer's pocket, instead of sharing the revenue with an on-demand delivery partner.

<p>MARK YOUR CALENDAR PACK YOUR BAGS!</p> <p>March 1-3, 2018 Southeast Produce Council's Southern Exposure Tampa Convention Center Tampa, FL www.southernexposure.seproducecouncil.com Come see Lipman at Booth 535!</p> <p>April 15-18, 2018 Restaurant Leadership Conference JW Marriott Desert Ridge Phoenix, AZ www.restaurantleadership.com</p>	<p>CREATED BY LIPMAN FOR OUR VALUABLE CUSTOMERS</p> <p>Visit our website... www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com</p> <p>Follow us</p> <p>Questions or comments about the newsletter? Contact: joanna.hazel@lipmanproduce.com</p>