



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Florida tomato volumes are at the light point of the Winter season but there seems to be enough fruit to keep the Florida-specific market satisfied. Growers projected lighter yields around this time due to bloom drop from previous cold weather, but near-perfect growing conditions in the last few weeks have spurred fruit on and helped to avoid a shortage situation. Spring crops are coming along nicely and volumes should pick up significantly when they start in early to mid-March. Overall quality is good, but there is still some wind scar to sort through. The sizing profile on rounds is down a little from what we normally expect this time of year due to prior weather but it is normal to see this as crops move into the last few weeks of the season. Roma numbers are light with several growers harvesting but none with significant volumes.

With moderate weather, crops past their peaks and normal acreage transitions, Western Mexico/Culiacan farms have lighter volumes on rounds, romas and grape tomatoes this week. With demand on the light side, there's ample product to go around but supply may be lighter during the transition into Spring plantings.

Bell Peppers: Florida bells are available in good volumes. Both coasts in South Florida continue to have solid production, although the West side is a little lighter due to slight bloom drop. All sizes are available but bigger fruit is becoming a little more snug than before. Quality is good. In Mexico, cold and rain have slowed field production but newer shade house product is in good supply. Quality is holding its own but we'll likely see lighter color and thinner walls from older fields in the coming days.

Cucumbers: Honduras continues to bring in decent numbers of fruit, despite being on the downhill side of the season. Quality is still okay, but

we look for it to diminish as these growers move into later plantings and pick longer from older fields due to elevated market pricing. Honduras is expected to go at least through mid-March, which is when Florida should be back in business. In the West, Mexican farms are down in numbers with supers in short supply. Production is expected to stay down for another 10-14 days due to cold weather in the growing region. Quality, however, continues to be nice.

Summer Squash: The next few weeks will be challenging for yellow and zucchini squash supply. Florida's crops were most affected by the previous cold weather, with current yields down significantly due to bloom drop. Quality is definitely a problem, as much of the fruit is coming in with 60-70% scarring caused by winds. Mexico's crop transition from the Sinaloa to Hermosillo areas is not a smooth process. Quality and production have decreased rapidly out of Sinaloa while the Hermosillo area has reported freezing temperatures this week and is behind schedule to start.

Green Beans: With South Florida and the Lake area both in production, beans continue to be plentiful in Florida. We anticipate supply to lighten up as growers consider walking away from crops due to low market prices. Quality is very nice, as growing conditions have been excellent. Western markets have supplies available daily, but do expect cooler weather to have an effect over the next 7-10 days.

Eggplant: Supplies remain light in Florida. Older fields have finished up and new crops are slow to come, most likely due to the previous cold weather and bloom drop issues. Overall quality on the product available is just okay. Mexico's production will remain steady for the next week with good quality fruit. Larger 18's are in high demand due to Lent season and are coming up short. 24's are in good supply though.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

*The National Diesel Average declined for the third week in a row (down \$.02), moving from \$3.03 to \$3.01 per gallon.

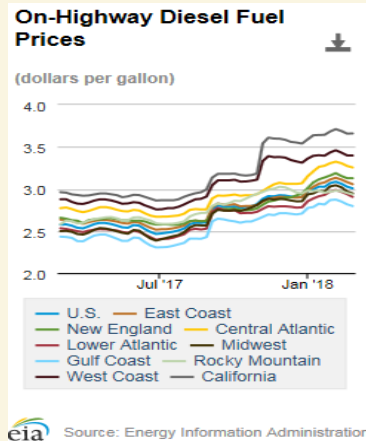
* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.43 higher than the same time last year.

* Nine of the ten reporting zones enjoyed price declines with the most significant change coming from the Lower Atlantic (down \$.033 per gallon). California was the only area that saw a slight increase of less than one cent.

*California maintains its role as the high price leader for diesel fuel at \$3.66 while the Gulf Coast region continues to offer the best bargain at \$2.80 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil continues its ascent moving from \$61.68 to \$63.01 per barrel (up 2.2%).

* Truck rates are actually down a little bit this week and supply is adequate in all tomato and vegetable shipping areas of the country.



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NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

Survey: Consumers Want More Innovation from Grocers

By: Erika Kincaid, www.fooddive.com, February 23, 2018

Dive Brief:

-A new survey commissioned Phononic, a refrigeration company, found that consumers want a more innovative supermarket shopping experience, with half saying grocery stores haven't figured out how to use technology like other retailers.

-Of the more than 1,000 adults surveyed, one third said they've tried a food or meal delivery service. Twenty-five percent said they tried it once and won't use it again, while 13% love it and use it regularly.

-Overall themes from the research show a desire for a more convenient shopping experience, more intelligent in-store technology, and more options related to refrigerated and frozen foods.

Almost half of the shoppers researchers spoke with say grocery stores need to get with the times. Forty-eight percent said grocery stores haven't changed in decades, and they need to modernize.

grocery store. More than 50% of respondents said they don't like going to new retailers — not out of loyalty, but rather because they don't know where to find anything.

Many shoppers also felt that the shopping experience should change to make it more convenient. Eighty-nine percent want a market that makes buying groceries easier.

The findings indicate consumers desire for a more modern, tech-savvy grocer, and one that makes shopping more efficient. They also indicate what many retailers have known for years: Most grocers are behind the ball on technology and innovation.

Grocers can start by making it easier for shoppers to find specific items they're looking for. This category seems to carry a great deal of weight with respondents, with 85% saying stores should make it easier for them to find things. They also want to see more items paired



together, like chips and dip or wine and cheese. Lastly, the checkout aisle needs an update, with 59% reporting they would be more likely to pick something up from this section if there were more healthy options.

There are a number of challenges traditional grocers face delivering on consumer demand for new technology. First, it's an expensive process. Second, there is no guarantee that the type of tech developed will resonate with shoppers and boost sales. And third, there is the risk that these changes will alienate older, core shoppers who will turn elsewhere for a more familiar shopping experience.

The answer, though, is not ignoring the problem.

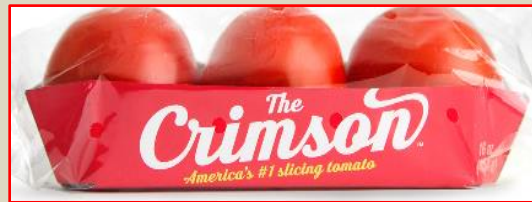


*This article was edited for content. For the complete article, please visit www.fooddive.com

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that is sure to be
a fast customer favorite!



Deep, red color
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PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



MARCH CALENDAR

March-All Month
Supply Management Month
March 10th
National Pack Your Lunch Day
National Ranch Dressing Day
March 11th
Daylight Savings Time Begins
March 15th
Companies that Care Day
March 17th
St. Patrick's Day

Estero, FL Weather

Fri Mar 2	Sat Mar 3	Sun Mar 4	Mon Mar 5	Tue Mar 6
82° F	77° F	76° F	76° F	78° F
57° F	53° F	51° F	55° F	62° F
VNW 13 MPH	N 13 MPH	NNE 11 MPH	NNE 9 MPH	ENE 7 MPH

AN APPLE A DAY

Eating Vegetables & Fruit May Also Reduce Risk of Depression

By: American Academy of Neurology, www.perishablenews.com, February 26, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- People who eat vegetables, fruit and whole grains may have lower rates of depression over time, according to a preliminary study released today that will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 70th Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, April 21 to 27, 2018.

The study found that people whose diets adhered more closely to the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet were less likely to develop depression than people who did not closely follow the diet. In addition to fruit and vegetables, the DASH diet recommends fat-free or low-fat dairy products and limits foods that are high in saturated fats and sugar. Studies have shown health benefits such as lowering high blood pressure and bad cholesterol (LDL), along with lowering body weight.

"Depression is common in older adults and more frequent in people with memory problems, vascular risk factors such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol, or people who have had a stroke," said study author Laurel Cherian, MD, of Rush University Medical Center in Chicago and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. "Making a lifestyle change such as changing your diet is often preferred over taking medications, so we wanted to see if diet could be an effective way to reduce the risk of depression."

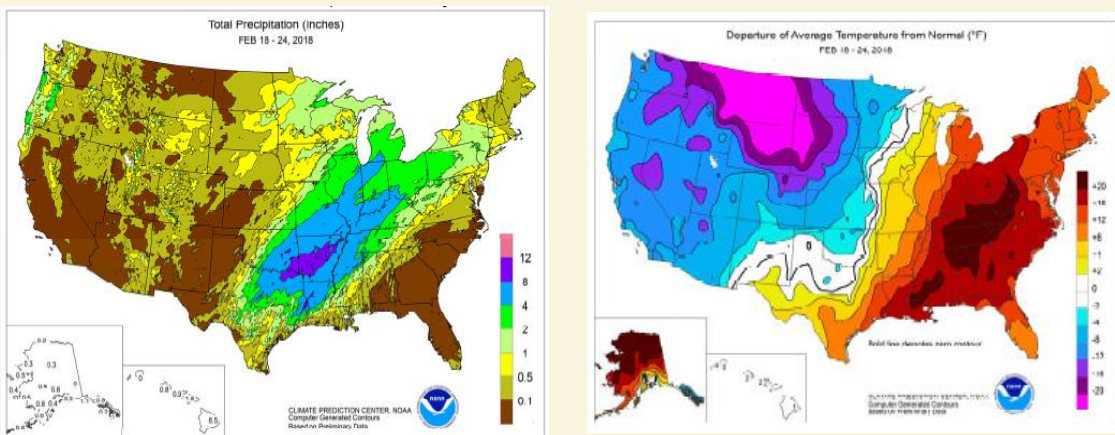
For the study, 964 participants with an average age of 81 were evaluated yearly for an average of six-and-a-half years. They were monitored for symptoms of depression such as being bothered by things that usually didn't affect them and feeling hopeless about the future. They also filled out questionnaires about how often they ate various foods, and the researchers looked at how closely the participants' diets followed diets such as the DASH diet, Mediterranean diet and the traditional Western diet.

Participants were divided into three groups based on how closely they adhered to the diets. People in the two groups that followed the DASH diet most closely were less likely to develop depression than people in the group that did not follow the diet closely. The odds of becoming depressed over time was 11 percent lower among the top group of DASH adherers versus the lowest group. On the other hand, the more closely people followed a Western diet—a diet that is high in saturated fats and red meats and low in fruits and vegetables—the more likely they were to develop depression.

Cherian noted that the study does not prove that the DASH diet leads to a reduced risk of depression; it only shows an association.

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

New Study Reveals Who Reads Nutrition Facts Labels

By: Gloria Dawson, www.supermarketnews.com, February 23, 2018

A Nutrition Facts label can relay vital information to a customer by helping them reduce sodium, fat, sugar or calories, but only if a customer reads them. And a new study from the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health and Medical School reveals only about one-third of young adults report frequent use of Nutrition Facts labels.

The study surveyed nearly 2,000 young adults aged 25-36, primarily in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. They found that women and people with high education and income were more likely to read Nutrition Facts labels as well as people who regularly prepare food, who are physically active or are classified as overweight. Not surprisingly, people who were trying to lose, gain or maintain weight also were more likely read these labels.

"Young adults who did read Nutrition Facts had better dietary patterns, including eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains," Mary Christoph, Ph.D., M.P.H., lead author of the study and post-doctoral fellow in the Medical School's Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, said in a news release.

The study was recently published in the Journal of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Those who did read labels were concerned with sugars, calories and serving size, according to the study. These findings were in line with the new Nutrition Facts panel that was announced in May 2016 after the study took place, Christoph said.

"We wanted to understand which young adults used nutrition labels, what parts of the label they read and how label use was related to food intake. These questions are important for understanding how to better support young adults in making food choices, and how to meet consumer preferences in terms of label content," Christoph said.

The study is being released at time when menu labeling is also being debated. In October, a review of 53 studies on restaurant calorie labeling found "limited evidence that menu labeling affects calories purchased at fast-food restaurants, some evidence demonstrates that it lowers calories purchased at certain types of restaurants and in cafeteria settings," according to the review published in Obesity, a research journal. "The limited data on modified calorie labels find that such labels can encourage lower-calorie purchases but may not differ in effects relative to calorie labels alone."

In early February, the House passed a scaled-back version of an Obama-era restaurant menu calorie count rule. The regulation is currently set to go into effect on May 7, 2018. At the time, Peter Larkin, president and CEO of National Grocers Association, said, "This bill provides a common-sense solution to a burdensome regulation that was applied as a one-size-fits-all approach to vastly different industries. Independent supermarket operators are committed to providing their customers with accurate nutritional information, but need the flexibility to implement the rule across a multitude of store formats, all of which operate much differently than a chain restaurant."



MARK YOUR CALENDAR PACK YOUR BAGS!

March 1-3, 2018

Southeast Produce Council's
Southern Exposure
Tampa Convention Center
Tampa, FL

www.southernexposure.seproducecouncil.com

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