



## MARKET UPDATE

**Tomatoes:** South Florida's tomato crop is sizing up slightly, but volume remains very light. Quality has been affected by previous weather conditions and is noted as average this week. Grape tomatoes are especially tight, as they are more susceptible to weather/quality concerns than larger varieties. We continue to look forward to April when Palmetto/Ruskin programs are underway.

In Mexico, romas are beginning the transition from Southern to Northern growing areas. Fruit from older fields is showing some quality, color, and condition issues and volume is light this week. Quality and sizing is better on round tomatoes, with more large fruit in the market this week. However, this will change as we move toward the seasonal decline in Southern growing areas. Fruit quality and volumes will improve as we work through the South-to-North transition and Baja gets going in a few weeks.

**Bell Peppers:** Florida's current pepper crops are struggling with volume and quality this week. Size is running small and the fruit is showing effects of the weather. New crops that have not been harmed by conditions are due to start by April 1st and should improve availability. Western Mainland Mexico is hitting the seasonal decline in peppers, with size, volume and quality dropping daily. Recent rain and heat may also cause some growers to drop out early due to quality concerns. The current shortage of product may be a concern until mid-April, when the California desert is into significant volume.

**Green Beans:** Although yields and quality are improving slightly in Florida, there are still not enough

green beans to meet the pre-holiday demand. Mexican growers expect to see skips in next week's production due to weather during the planting cycle. Unfortunately, supply is expected to remain light until the week following Easter, when crops have rebounded from weather and the California desert is up and running.

**Cucumbers:** Import cucs are finishing up with mostly offgrades available. Florida Spring crops are just beginning and there are very light volumes available. Supply should improve as more growers get started over the next few weeks. Supply is also light in Mexico, as Sinaloa is moving toward the end of its crops and new fields are just getting started.

**Eggplant:** Florida's Spring eggplant crops are very slow to start, but supply should improve in about two weeks.

**Summer Squash:** Florida farms are seeing light yields on squash, as windy weather has caused some pollination issues. There are scarring concerns on both yellow and zucchini, although some lots are better than others. Mexican squash production is also working through the normal transition between growing areas this week. Light volumes have been crossing but we should see them pick up next week.

**Chili Peppers:** There are three main areas of chili production in Mexico this week. Escuinapa has the strongest volume, but is keeping much of the product inside the border to meet national demand. Sinaloa continues to ship fruit, but may finish up sooner rather than later due to heat. New production out of Sonora is slow to start due to rain, but should increase next week.

## TRANSPORTATION FACTS

\* The National Diesel Average has risen significantly this week (\$.08) and comes in at \$2.10 per gallon.

\* Despite the price increase, the average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.82 lower than the same time last year.

\* Diesel prices rose in all areas of the country with the most significant increase in the Lower Atlantic area, which saw a \$.09 per gallon jump.

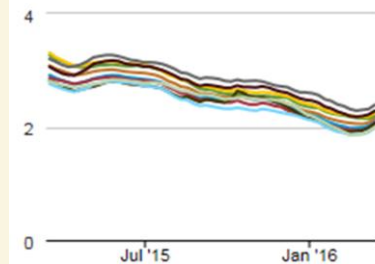
\* California reported the highest-priced diesel fuel at \$2.39. The fuel bargain in the nation can be found in the Gulf Coast region at \$1.99.

\* The WTI Crude Oil Price dipped 5.1% this week, moving from \$38.29 to \$36.34 per barrel.

\* Trucks are readily available throughout the country with a surplus reported in many production locations.

### On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices

(dollars per gallon)



eia Source: Energy Information Administration

## ON THE HORIZON CONTENTS

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## NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

### Millennials at the Market

[www.progressivegrocer.com](http://www.progressivegrocer.com), March 15, 2016

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Millennials have overtaken Baby Boomers in terms of population numbers and hold an incredible \$1.3 trillion-plus in annual spending power. Any grocer wanting to stay ahead of the curve has made substantial shifts in their promotions, product choices and more to fit the desires of the young cohort. But, what do they really care about? Most Millennials have reached adulthood and brought with them a sense of spontaneity and uniqueness to all things food.

So what does this mean for grocers? Cooking is not seen as a necessary evil or boring task by Millennials. The vast majority see it as an experience that is to be shared. Cash in on this love of experiences by hosting live events in your store – think cooking classes, cake-decorating tutorials, or wine tastings.

Be sure to have recipe cards or step-by-step printouts available as “takeaways” for attendees so they have another reason to come back to the store for ingredient purchases. Invite Millennial social influencers and they’ll create content about the event that lives on long after the tutorial or tasting is over.

Seventy percent of Millennials are more likely to buy items from companies that support their preferred causes, according to National Marketing Institute.

What does this mean for grocers? Simply put, Millennials care about

charities and cause efforts more than ever and want that reflected in their purchases. If your store carries items from companies that are upfront about their sustainability and charity efforts, Millennials will be much more likely to spend their dollars there. In fact, 65 percent of Millennials recognize the Fair Trade Certified label, according to National Marketing Institute.

Don’t stop with the products your store carries; promoting the causes your store supports, whether within the local community or globally-known, will go a long way in resonating with today’s social-conscious Millennials.

Fifty-seven percent of Millennials have tried a recipe they saw posted on social media, according to Minio Studio.

What does this mean for grocers? Social media is by and large the main source of cooking inspiration for Millennials. Help them out! Social platforms create an awesome opportunity for brands to spark ideas and drive impulse purchases in-store. Providing recipes, how-to videos and tutorials across social media platforms takes the guesswork out of choosing what’s for dinner and makes the entire process of cooking that much more gratifying.

The best part is if they enjoy what they make, they’ll be more likely to come back to your sites for inspiration in the future. Want to make the recipes truly personal and

enticing? Peer-to-peer sharing is huge with this segment. So partnering with Millennial social influencers to create creative recipes and videos for you will help you be relevant and capture your share of the Millennial wallet.

Sixty-one percent of Millennial women and 60 percent of Millennial men enjoy cooking, according to Forbes.

What does this mean for grocers? Catering to the preferences of both genders means more share of wallet for grocers. Also, because both truly enjoy cooking, they will likely be shopping for fresh, fresh, and more fresh items. Even when it comes to picking up frozen convenience meals, Millennials will add ingredients and seasonings to these dishes for an extra kick. Having meaningful pairings or demos nearby could be the ultimate purchase-driver.

Final note: Incorporating insights about this adventurous young segment’s love for social media and social good is key for deploying path-to-purchase strategies. Think about the experiences you’re bringing, the charities you’re supporting and the inspiration you’re providing. When you bring all these strategies together, how your store resonates with Millennials will be truly impactful.

## SPOTLIGHT ON LIPMAN MANTECA, CA



When Lipman expanded to better serve Western markets, its first repacking home was in Sacramento, CA. After 8 years in the Sacramento area, the operation was moved to Manteca which put the facility in close proximity to Lipman’s own farms.

Now located in the heart of the agricultural production area of the San Joaquin Valley, Lipman Manteca can easily serve the Bay area, Sacramento, Nevada, and the San Joaquin Valley, as well as Southern California. This centralized location between two major highways allows for speedy and convenient deliveries.

Our Manteca group provides a wide range of repack options for foodservice, retail, and QSR customers. A primary focus is on meeting local demand for fresh tomatoes and vegetables.

A team of 70 production workers and 5 office staff make things happen here. Like other Lipman locations, they are also very active in community service projects. Each year they work with the Women’s Center, Youth and Family Services of San Joaquin County, and local law enforcement agencies to make their community a better place to live and work.

### PRODUCE BAROMETER

ITEM	QUALITY	PRICING
Bell Pepper	Fair	Higher
Cucumber	Fair	Higher
Eggplant	Fair to Good	Steady
Green Beans	Good	Lower
Lettuce-Iceberg	Fair	Steady
Jalapenos	Varies	Higher
Onions	Fair-Good	Steady
Tomatoes	Fair-Good	Higher



### MARCH CALENDAR

- All Month**  
International Hamburger & Pickle Month
- March 20**  
Great American Meat Out Day  
National Ravioli Day
- March 21**  
National Crunchy Taco Day

### Estero, FL Weather

Fri Mar 18	Sat Mar 19	Sun Mar 20	Mon Mar 21	Tue Mar 22	Wed Mar 23
84° F	77° F	75° F	73° F	77° F	77° F
66° F	66° F	59° F	55° F	61° F	63° F
WSW 8 MPH	S 8 MPH	W 14 MPH	N 11 MPH	E 8 MPH	SE 11 MPH
Precip 20%	Precip 50%	Precip 50%			
Averages 80° F/56° F	Averages 80° F/57° F	Averages 81° F/57° F	Averages 81° F/57° F	Averages 81° F/57° F	Averages 81° F/57° F

## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

### 2016 Outlook: Restaurant Technology Takes a Back Seat

By: Bob Krummert, [www.restaurant-hospitality.com](http://www.restaurant-hospitality.com), March 14, 2016

Haven't installed state-of-the-art technology at your restaurant yet? No problem. It's last on the list of customer priorities for 2016. What they want the most: lower prices, a stronger focus on food safety and an improved lineup of healthy menu items, no matter the segment. That's how respondents ranked 15 key issues in "Tall Orders: Higher Wages and Menu Changes", the 2016 North American Restaurant and Foodservice Outlook released last week by global business advisory firm AlixPartners. The report combines survey data with a qualitative component provided by the organization's in-house consulting experts. The focus is on chain restaurants, but most of the findings are pertinent to full-service operations, too.

Here are some key findings from this study.

**Lower prices.** Customers always want to get more for less, and AlixPartners found a renewed emphasis on value this year. 56% of survey respondents plan to seek out more discounts during 2016 than they did during 2015. Operators shouldn't expect a lot of new business if they do offer more deals. Almost 60% of consumers would like to see discounts coming from operations they already frequent; only 16% said a price cut would convince them to try a new restaurant. Discount promotions are more frequently used in quick-service restaurants than in their full-service counterparts. But if you use this tactic, go big. 31% of respondents said one large discount is better than multiple smaller ones in encouraging trial.

**Food safety.** ¼ of survey respondents said food safety should be one of the foodservice industry's top three areas of concern. The stakes are definitely high for operators if something goes bad. 90% of respondents take note of food safety incidents at restaurants. 28% said they would never eat again at a restaurant that experienced a food safety outbreak, no matter the geographic location of the unit or units where the actual problem occurred. There's no quick fix on the horizon. "Rapid shifts in the supply chain—especially in cases in which some form of local-ingredient focus requires special variations in the supply base—will also likely give rise to new constraints and will broaden areas of exposure on long-standing food safety policies and practices," the report notes. "Those shifts could force many operators to rethink—and reinvest in—their standards or procedures. Leaders in the more-health-conscious brand areas are being tested by challenges presented by more-localized sourcing. As chains convert their supply bases to respond to consumer demand for greater and greater amounts of fresh, local ingredients, the industry is likely to see other such challenges."

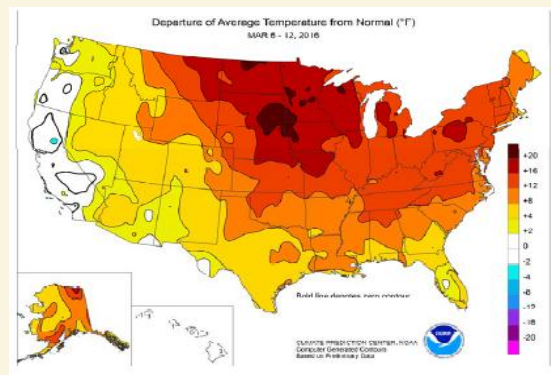
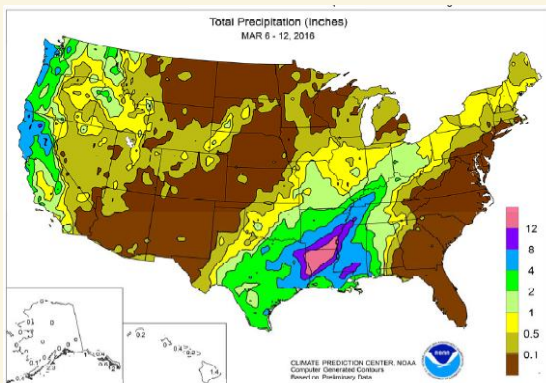
**Technology.** The study points out that while technology is indeed popular with customers, restaurant operators may wish to think more strategically about how and when it should be implemented. "What we're hearing from the consumer plus seeing in the field calls into question whether all of today's investments in consumer technology, including digital loyalty programs, are well-placed bets," says AlixPartners managing director Eric Dzwonczyk. "Some technologies are already superfluous, given the fast pace of smartphone innovations; some are getting obsoleted almost as soon as they're installed; and for many technologies, there is just simply a finite market. It would behoove companies not to get too far out in front of their skis in this area."

One cautionary statistic: just 10% of survey respondents felt restaurant chains should provide more consumer-facing technology in 2016. It's less important to them than "improve kids' menus." Of the available technology options, digital menus and online ordering capability are the top priorities for customers. More than half said they are more important than mobile functionality and tablets. Digital loyalty programs ranked as a third high priority for restaurant chains. But only 14% of respondents said loyalty programs are very or extremely influential in their choice of restaurant. While 58% of respondents said they had joined a restaurant loyalty program, 90% said they do not use more than three programs very often.

"Those insights potentially call into question the size of the market for loyalty and consumer technology: is everyone vying for the same narrow consumer base?" the study asks. "Or is limited participation in loyalty programs more a question of having the right technology to make it appealing and convenient? The loyalty program appears to be a wait-and-see topic while many operators assess the potential for increased adoption rates when more-robust offerings get introduced—especially any that can compare to Starbucks' integrated loyalty and payment platform." Factor in the "severest labor crisis" the industry has ever faced" and 2016 is going to be a challenging year for restaurant operators "Strategic restraint" will be required. "Success will likely be realized by companies that achieve more with less and that don't try to address every trend and initiative all at once," AlixPartners predicts.

## NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

### Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



## AN APPLE A DAY

### 5 Tips for Making Vegetables Addictive

By: Sharon Palmer, [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com), March 15, 2016

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March is National Nutrition Month, and this year's theme is "Savor the Flavor of Eating Right." I am taking this theme to heart, because I'm on a mission to get people to eat their vegetables – and to *like* doing it.

In the field of nutrition, experts may not always see eye to eye on issues such as the perfect amount and type of fat for optimal health or the ideal ratio of carbs to protein for weight loss. But there's one thing we all pretty much agree on: Eat more vegetables! A body of evidence links eating more of these healthy plant foods to a laundry list of benefits, including lower risk of heart disease, certain types of cancer, diabetes and obesity. Yet, only 9 percent of us meet our daily vegetable goal of 2 to 3 cups per day.

One reason people don't eat their veggies is because they simply don't like the way they taste. Perhaps they were raised on boiled-to-death asparagus, boring nuked broccoli or bland steamed cauliflower. But we have moved way beyond this method of preparing vegetables. Today's chefs and foodies are paving the way toward a new appreciation for humble vegetables – placing them at the center of the plate. And they're proving that vegetables can be just plain delicious. In honor of National Nutrition Month, I asked some of my favorite foodie dietitians to spill the beans on their best advice for making vegetables absolutely addictive. Try these tips all month long, and see if they work for you.

**1. Roast vegetables to golden perfection.** U.S. News Eat+Run blogger Marisa Moore, owner of Marisa Moore Nutrition, suggests spreading vegetables on a baking dish, drizzling them with a bit of your favorite oil and a touch of salt and pepper, and roasting them until they're golden brown to create a sweet, caramelized crust that's simply irresistible. "Try roasted cauliflower or broccoli, green beans or beets to start," she adds.

**2. Serve vegetables with a fabulous dressing or dip.** One way to make fresh vegetables taste absolutely amazing is to serve them with a flavorful vinaigrette, dressing or dip. Jessica Crandall, a spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, says, "I love to make my own dressing with blood orange olive oil, rice vinegar and herbs, then drizzle over cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, bell peppers and celery."

**3. Pile vegetables onto your favorite foods.** Vegetables keep excellent company with some of our favorite foods of all time, such as lasagna, pizza and tacos. So, make the most of these foods, and pile on the veggies. Elana Natker, blogger at A Sprinkle of Sage, says, "My best tip is to put vegetables on a pizza. That's honestly how I learned how to cook vegetables."

**4. Saute vegetables for maximum flavor.** Take a lesson from other cuisines, such as French, Chinese, Indian and Mediterranean, and saute or stir-fry your vegetables with a bit of good oil and a touch of spices or herbs for amazing flavor and texture. Nutrition expert Vandana Sheth suggests using different spice combinations for sauteing different types of vegetables, such as cumin, ginger and turmeric, with cauliflower, zucchini, eggplant or okra.

**5. Create curvy vegetables.** Spiralizing vegetables is the latest way to give boring vegetables a hefty punch of pizzazz. By using a spiral slicer, you can turn vegetables into thin ribbons, which may be used in pasta, salads or stir-fries. Sarah Mueller, mom of four, and blogger at Lose, Mama!, suggests using a spiral cutter to turn sweet potatoes, zucchini, carrots, beets and numerous other colorful veggies into "noodles," which may be sauteed with a little cooking spray, salt and pepper. "Serve in the place of pasta, rice, or anything," she adds.

So, find your way into the kitchen, and fall in love with vegetables. Your mind, body and soul will thank you for it.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS

**May 4, 2016**

NEPC Breakfast  
at the New England Produce Center  
90 New England Produce Center  
Chelsea, MA  
[www.newenglandproduceCouncil.com](http://www.newenglandproduceCouncil.com)

**May 21-24, 2016**

National Restaurant Association Show  
McCormick Place Convention Center  
Chicago, IL  
<http://show.restaurant.org>

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