



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: With Palmetto/Ruskin winding down rapidly and new growing areas just beginning to scrap –pick fields, Eastern markets are short on tomatoes this week. Both Quincy and South Carolina will be in production over the next 7-10 days, bringing some relief to the round, roma and grape markets. However, with Quincy’s acreage down, overall supply may be less than desired until local deals start in July. Quality out of Palmetto/Ruskin is just average, but fruit should improve as we move into new crops.

With only a couple of shippers online now, Western Mainland Mexico is on its last tomato legs for the season. Roma and round production are primarily coming from Eastern Mexico and Baja, where volume increases have been slow to come due to a snap of cool weather. Look for better supply next week as fields catch up with warmer weather. Grape tomato volumes out of Baja are light and may remain so for another 10-14 days when additional growers will add to market volumes.

Bell Peppers: Central and North Florida still have some product, but the bulk of Eastern pepper production has migrated to Georgia. Georgia’s crops look good but we could see some temporary effects of recent weather over the next week. Carolina farms are expected to start in 10-14 days, which should further improve the supply situation. In the West, Mainland Mexico is on the way out and the California desert is slowing down. Quality has declined as growers reach the tail end of the season, making retail-friendly product short. Bakersfield is on tap to start early next week, which should help to ease the supply situation.

Cucumbers: Mainland Mexico continues to cross good volumes of cucumbers although some growers are seeing quality issues. Baja’s volume has picked up and quality is

really nice from this Western growing area. In the East, Georgia is now into solid volumes with more acreage coming on. As well, a few growers in the Carolinas have started in a light way, with more to come next week.

Summer Squash: Rainy weather in the past week has slowed Georgia’s squash production but there are local deals in a variety of areas that are slowly beginning to bring fruit to market. Western product is available in several California and Mexican growing areas, but supply remains light. Look for increases out of Baja and Santa Maria as early as next week.

Green Beans: With rain comes quality and production issues on green beans out of Georgia and North Florida. The supply chain may experience a temporary hiccup as growers work through rain-damaged crops. Western crops are transitioning from the California desert to Brentwood and Fresno, where supply is gradually increasing.

Eggplant: Eggplant is on the shy side throughout the country this week. Plant City-area crops are not strong and Georgia is just getting up and running. Look for Eastern volume to increase in another week or so as Georgia farms get further into crops. In the West, Mexico is in the short rows of the season and the California desert’s production has been light due to cooler weather. Supply is minimal and there’s a lot of scarring on the fruit that is available. New California areas are on tap to start after June 15th.

Chili Peppers: Western chili pepper supply continues to be challenging as most areas in production specialize in just a few varieties. Quality is varied with some of the weaker product coming out of Mainland Mexico. In the East, there is light supply available out of the Plant City area. Availability will pick up as Georgia gets rolling over the weekend.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

* The National Diesel Average remained stable this week, holding at \$2.54 per gallon.

* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.18 higher than the same time last year.

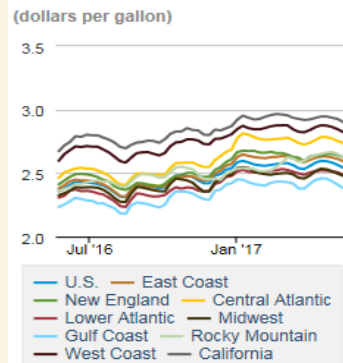
* Although reporting areas were mixed on pricing adjustments this week (some up, others down), all movements were less than \$.01 per gallon.

*California remains the high price leader for diesel fuel at \$2.91 while the Gulf Coast region continues to offer the best bargain at \$2.38 per gallon.

*The WTI Crude Oil price stayed relatively stable, moving slightly from \$48.66 to \$48.90 per barrel.

*With the upcoming holiday weekend, transportation is on the short side in several shipping areas including California, Mexico crossing points, and South/Central Florida.

On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices



Source: Energy Information Administration

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RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Kruse/Thorn: What is Instagram Doing to the Food World?

By: Bret Thorn and Nancy Kruse, www.nrn.com, May 11, 2017

NRN senior food editor Bret Thorn says how food looks is far less important than how it tastes.

Nancy, it's often said that people eat with their eyes. I feel compelled to point out that that's not literally true. Of course presentation is important when it comes to food, but we eat with our mouths, which we use to taste and touch and even smell our food (via nasal passages in the back of the mouth). Food and drink are the only art forms that use all five senses, and I'd put sight in fourth place — maybe fifth if the food is crunchy.

But these days, with so many people broadcasting every part of their lives via social media, appearance has taken on a new importance. As I write this, there are 217,351,183 Instagram posts with the hashtag #food. No wonder attractive menu items like well-garnished avocado toast (372,269 posts) have become so popular.

Of course, there are simple approaches to making food photo-friendly — not serving New England clam chowder in a white bowl, for example. But some food that looks good in real life doesn't photograph well. Should that disqualify it as a valued menu item? Are wonderful but visually unappealing stews like goulash and beef bourguignon destined for the garbage disposal of history?

As a food writer, restaurants have steered me to tables with photo-friendly lighting; one not-so-subtly seated me under a gentle spotlight. But it seems to me that restaurant lighting should highlight the customers, not what they're putting in their mouths.

But as much as I moan about the visual nature of so much of the food fetishism out there, it is a fact of life for restaurant operators. So I'd like to ask you, Nancy, with Instagram's #food hashtag now at 217,353,940 images, how should operators respond in a food world where the importance of form seems to be outstripping function?

The power of the image



Kruse Company president Nancy Kruse responds to NRN senior food editor Bret Thorn's take on food's image in pop culture.

When readers of our monthly exchanges tell us how much they enjoy it when we argue, Bret, you and I scratch our heads. Fact is, we virtually never disagree; we are in accord on most everything, even though we typically have our own take on any given subject.

This topic, however, is the exception that proves the rule. With all due respect, I think you're off base this one — and I mean that in the nicest possible way. I'm convinced that few things have more impact on humans than visual stimulation, whether it's beautiful flowers, forests or fettuccine. It's called food porn for a reason, Bret.

... it goes without saying that the impact of the image hasn't been lost on food and restaurant marketers. For years, mouthwatering close ups of backlit piles of pearly pink shrimp dripping in butter have driven patrons to Red Lobster as reliably as if Pavlov had rung his bell. What about the photography that appears in the pages of NRN, which makes food the hero and in doing so is both inspirational and aspirational to foodservice operators? And come on, Bret, haven't you ever seen a dazzling dish put down on the table next to yours and told the waiter that you'll have what she's having?

I agree with you that some terrific foods are unfortunately unphotogenic. New York City chef Jonathan Wu talked about this at the recent Worlds of Flavor Conference in Napa Valley. To him, "unpretty" foods in shades of brown that signify hearty flavor and comfort are at odds with contemporary esthetics. I suspect that if gizzards were gorgeous and liver looked lovely, they'd be a much

easier sell, and it makes me wonder if we'll be seeing some new-age version of that old, institutional "G-bop," the generous bunch of parsley piled on a plate just prior to service in order to amp up its sex appeal and thus avoid that truly scary garbage disposal of history.

I do wonder, though, if you're talking apples and oranges in your commentary on Instagram. The lure of beautiful food is literally as old as time; after all, Adam chose to bite that luscious red apple over the joys of Eden.

But while Instagram, with its staggering numbers, is supposedly about glorious gastronomy, I suspect that many diners who post on the site are less into the menu and more into themselves. It's the look-at-me, I'm-too-cool-for-school phenomenon that afflicts much of social media.

Operators may post beauty shots as tactics for promoting their restaurants, but I bet lots of diners who follow suit are mostly promoting their awesomeness.

On the subject of menu beauty shots, it's worth noting that we're fast approaching the NRA Show, where the Foodamental Studio series offers hands-on instructional workshops. One really nifty session is devoted to food photography and how to make it attractive on social media platforms. It's geared toward restaurateurs who don't know how to show their dishes to advantage, and they get to practice with a noted food photographer to learn the do's and don'ts of layout and lighting, which is very timely given your Instagram data.

Speaking of lighting, Bret, I have a final, serious bone to pick with you. On behalf of all women over the age of 40, I'd prefer to keep the spotlight firmly on the food, thank you very much. From my point of view, that's exactly where it belongs.





LIPMAN LOCAL IN PICTURES



Meet the French family of Sunnyside Farms in Virginia! They grow squashes, peppers, okra and more for our local program.



Zeke Stecher grows a variety of items, including eggplant, for our New Jersey program.



Scott Rush talks squash with Harlan Hess of Hess Farms in Pennsylvania. They grow a wide variety of items for our customers in the region.



Doug Wilson of DLB in Clinton, NC is a cornerstone of our NC vegetable program.

PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



JUNE CALENDAR

All Month
National Fresh Fruit & Vegetables Month

June 1st
Say Something Nice Day

June 4th
Birthday of the Shopping Cart

June 5th
National Ketchup Day

Ruskin, FL Weather

Fri May 26	Sat May 27	Sun May 28	Mon May 29	Tue May 30	Wed May 31
82° F	91° F	91° F	91° F	88° F	86° F
70° F	73° F	79° F	77° F	75° F	73° F
W 13 MPH	VSW 11 MPH	W 11 MPH	W 10 MPH	W 9 MPH	NW 4 MPH
			Precip 20%	Precip 40%	Precip 30%

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

What Gen Z Restaurant Consumers Want

By: Ron Ruggless, www.nrn.com, May 21, 2017

The next generation of restaurant consumers, who are now in their teens, will demand the non-negotiables of good value, a unique experience and superb food safety, according to an NRA Show panel on Saturday. “Gen Z will have a huge impact on the global markets and the foodservice industry,” said Abhijeet Jadhav, senior manager of marketing strategy for Georgia-Pacific Professional and moderator of a panel titled “Introducing Generation: The World’s Newest Influential Decision Maker.” With about 80 million members, mostly in their teens, Gen Z is on the cusp of being the restaurant industry’s major consumer market, Jadhav said.

“These folks are not just Millennial 2.0,” Jadhav told a packed audience that spilled well into the NRA Show’s exhibit hall. Born between 1995 and the mid- to late-2000s, Gen Z customers have values that are very different from Millennials, he said. They spend a lot of time online and tend to have shorter attention spans, Jadhav said. And because they consume a lot of information, they tend to make decisions quickly.

Early research on Gen Z consumers indicates that they want good value and quality from restaurants, like the food found in fast casual. They also want inviting service and a welcoming ambience that makes them feel valued, Jadhav said. Additionally, they demand cleanliness and the highest standards of food safety.

Adam Millman, senior director of Yale Dining in New Haven, Conn., said Gen Z covers a lot of college students, and that requires approaching them with information. “We’re telling a story,” Millman said. “This generation wants to know why we are doing things. And we’re telling that story through technology, which is their major form of communication.” Yale uses its foodservice smartphone app to detail food sources, which farms ingredients are from, and when the products were harvested. The university offers supply-chain transparency from farm to plate, he said. In addition, Gen Z customers don’t want to wait, so Yale allows students to order through the app and have the food ready when they arrive.

Digital nativism is a trait unique to Gen Z, as opposed to Millennials, said Jill Ahern, senior director for insights and design packaging at Havi. Technology has been available to Gen Z consumers for their entire lives, she said. “That really shapes how they interact with the world,” Ahern said. “It allows them to get ratings and do crowdsourcing for places where they might want to eat or where they might want to work.”

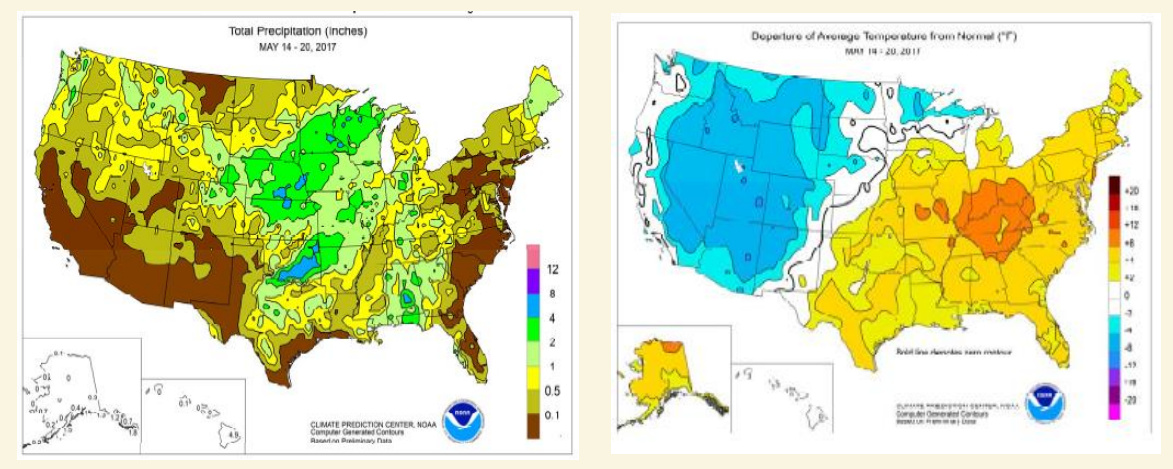
“This generation is really about the experience,” Millman of Yale said. “They are willing to wait two hours to go to a place that has the technology behind it, versus the brand they are comfortable with.” Gen Z customer Christopher Chavez of Chicago said he likes to seek out restaurants that have been suggested on social media in order to get new experiences.

Technology also gives the Gen Z customers the ability to find and compare new places, Ahern said. “Another hallmark of this generation is that it is a very diverse generation and very open-minded compared to earlier generations,” she said. “They are very adventuresome. They are very open to new tastes that you don’t typically associate with teenagers.

“If you are looking for trends with this group, you are probably too late with this group,” she added. “You really need to be challenging them and giving them new things. Give them something to talk about.”

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

Shoppers Value Both Digital, Human Engagement: Study

www.progressivegrocer.com, May 12, 2017

While consumers increasingly are spending more time shopping online for everything, including groceries, their desire for human interaction isn't lost: both digital and human engagement are critical influencers, new research from Interactions, a division of Stamford, Conn.-based retail firm Daymon, shows.

"What Shoppers Want from Retail Technology," the new report, found that 84 percent of shoppers expect retailers to successfully employ technological features to improve their shopping experience, while 62 percent are motivated by an initial human greeting upon entering a store.

"Consumers want both digital and human interfaces today. They desire the integration of technology into their shopping experience, but nothing can truly replace the accessibility of a traditional store associate," said Bharat Rupani, president of Interactions. "The key for retailers is to balance human interaction with technology to streamline and complement the consumer's overall retail journey."

Although consumers may require an in-person associate for guidance during their retail experience, they're also eager to fully integrate themselves into the technological advancements happening in the retail space. These advancements include:

Targeted Notifications – Shoppers' behavior can be influenced by ongoing communication from retailers. Nearly 60 percent of consumers spend more money at stores that send mobile notifications, which can be received while they shop or while they're at home. Retailers have the opportunity to influence purchase decisions through a consistent stream of communication, leading to unplanned purchases and motivation to visit a physical store or website.

Efficiency and Human Interaction – Consumers want human interaction balanced with technological advancements to enhance the retail experience. Only 10 percent of shoppers want to interact with a store associate as part of the checkout process, providing retailers the opportunity to employ alternative, more automated checkout methods. At the same time, more than 60 percent want to be greeted in-store by an associate.

"It's no longer an option: Today's retailers must invest in technological advances to provide shoppers with the seamless retail experience they desire," said Rekha Ramesh, Daymon SVP of global IT and digital. "For retailers who need to prioritize where to invest, faster, more automated alternative checkout methods, followed closely by targeted notifications, are good points of entry."

FRESH TOMATOES

the best
of nature™

MARK YOUR CALENDAR &
PACK YOUR BAGS!

July 28-30, 2017

PMA Foodservice Conference & Expo
Portola Hotel and Spa
Monterey, CA
www.pma.com/events
Come visit Team Lipman at Booth 217!

September 28-30, 2017

Southeast Produce Council's
2017 Southern Innovations Organics & Foodservice Expo
Hilton Head Beach & Tennis Convention Center
Hilton Head, SC
www.southerninnovations.seproducecouncil.com

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