



MARKET UPDATE

Tomatoes: Palmetto/Ruskin area growers are in full-fledged harvest and have plenty of rounds and romas available. There's enough large fruit to go around, but there's no longer an excess like last week. Overall quality is very good, but some growers- depending on their specific location- are having a little concern with wind-related scarring. Grape volumes are still a bit snug in Florida. The southern part of the state is finished, for all practical purposes, and Palmetto/ Ruskin's grapes have been more affected by winds and scarring than their larger tomato counterparts.

Round and roma tomatoes are status quo in the West. Baja and Eastern Mexico have started in a light way while Culiacan-area farms will see declining volumes until the season ends later this month. Grape tomato numbers continue to be on the light side due to yields and quality concerns associated with seasonal decline. Look for the California desert to start round tomato harvests around May 10th.

Bell Peppers: Most South Florida farms have wrapped up on big fruit but will continue to ship choice and small fruit as long as it's feasible. Plant City is the spot for retail-grade and sized peppers, but there's certainly not an excess available and quality has been hit or miss. With Georgia not scheduled to start until June 1st, we may see leaner supply for the next few weeks. Quality has improved slightly this week but will continue to warrant close attention as lots vary by grower and location. The Western market continues to work through the transition from Mexico to California production. Mexico's fruit is declining in quality as thinner walls and age of the plants are causing fruit not to travel well. Fortunately, California volumes are picking up and fruit quality is much better.

Cucumbers: South Florida is still in production but should wrap things up over the next 10-14 days. Volume is

still fairly strong, but there are a lot of offgrades in the mix. Plant City has light volumes but acreage is light in comparison. Georgia should start in mid-late May and North Carolina will follow around June 1st. Mexico continues to have strong volumes from the Mainland and increasing numbers out of Baja. Other than some yellowing from first picks, quality is nice from both areas.

Summer Squash: Squash production is fragmented in the East. South Florida still has some product, Plant City offers light supply, and North Florida/South Georgia is beginning to see numbers increase. Quality has been very challenging in recent weeks, but is improving slowly as growers get into new fields. As usual, yellow squash has the most quality concerns with scarring being the main issue. Western squash is coming from Northern Mexico where the season will finish up within 1-3 weeks, depending on how plants act to the extreme weather fluctuations in the area. Availability will likely be snug and quality suspect in the West until Santa Maria, CA comes online around May 15th.

Green Beans: South Florida growers will finish crops in the next 7-10 days, leaving the bean deal to a few remaining farms in the lake area and Plant City to handle Eastern bean supply until Georgia kicks in gear. At this point, we expect a smooth transition with little to no gap. Quality is good. Western markets are coming up a little short on beans, as most growers in Mexico are finished for the season and the California desert doesn't yet have the volume to meet market demands.

Eggplant: South Florida farms are in the short rows of eggplant and should see the season wrap up over the next week or two. Plant City has less acreage planted this year and will continue with lighter volumes. In the West, a few desert growers have begun their California season with beautiful fruit while Mexico's season is winding down with quality issues consistent with older fields.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

* Continuing to climb, the national average diesel fuel price moved from \$3.13 to \$3.16 per gallon this week

* The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$.57 higher than the same time last year.

* Every area in the country reported price hikes with the most notable from the Midwest, where the price rose \$.04 per gallon.

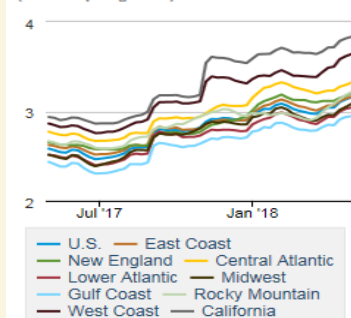
* California maintains its role as the high price leader for diesel at \$3.83 per gallon while the Gulf Coast region offers the lowest price at \$2.95 per gallon.

* The WTI Crude Oil fell slightly this week, moving from \$68.05 to \$67.25 per barrel (down 1.2%).

* Trucks are tightening up at Nogales and Texas crossing points and are short in Florida. All other shipping areas have adequate transportation available.

On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices

(dollars per gallon)



Source: Energy Information Administration

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KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE CONSUMER

How to Win the Millennial Shopper

By: Gina Acosta, www.retailleader.com, April 30, 2018

Millennial shoppers are having children as they reach their 30s, and their shopping behaviors are completely different from previous generations. New findings from the National Retail Federation's quarterly Consumer View report provide insight into how these new parents shop, spend and engage with brands differently than parents in other generations.

"The millennial generation has at turns confounded, inspired and challenged researchers and analysts with their spending habits," NRF Director of Retail and Consumer Insights Katherine Cullen said. "As many millennials move into parenthood, we are beginning to see how their expectations and shopping preferences compare with those of previous generations. Whether it's using a subscription service to make sure diapers don't run out or going online to research the best crib or car seat, millennials shop differently than other parents."

Born between 1981 and 1994, millennials are parents to 50 percent of today's children, more than 1 million millennial women become new mothers each year, and millennials make a significant contribution to the \$1 trillion U.S. parents spend annually on raising their children.

Millennial parents differ from other parents both in their lifestyle and shopping choices. According to the report, 40 percent hold a graduate degree, or more than double the 19 percent of other parents, and 69 percent of respondents earn more than the national median income of \$59,000 a year, compared with 53 percent of other parents. Millennials also hold a positive outlook on their futures: the generation's consumer confidence has risen



by more than 20 percentage points since 2008, and a third feel that their financial situation has improved over the last year. And 80 percent of millennials with children are in their 30s.

With so much information available on mobile devices, millennial parents turn to their smartphones at every point during shopping. The study found 78 percent use their phones to research products (compared with 58 percent of other parents), 75 percent to check prices or availability (also compared with 58 percent) and 71 percent to pay at checkout or place an order (51 percent). In addition, 71 percent will leave a review, process a return or chat with customer service after purchasing, compared with 43 percent of other parents.

Millennial parents are often in a hurry, and 86 percent have used same-day shipping compared with just 67 percent of parents from other generations. And they're willing to pay for convenience – only 53 percent expect free shipping on small orders under \$50 compared with 66 percent of other parents. Subscription services – which can supply automatic refills and discounted prices on items such as diapers, formula and baby wipes – are used by 40 percent, compared with 18 percent of other parents.

"To keep parents of any generation happy, brands and retailers must deliver on both price and quality," Cullen said. "But millennials are very concerned about good customer services and are twice as likely to back out of a purchase for lack of it. For millennials, service ranks ahead of convenience, selection and loyalty programs."

Millennial parents say where they shop matters, with 44 percent only shopping at brands that reflect their social or political values, a factor cited by only 23 percent of parents from other generations.

Once a brand gains the loyalty of millennial parents, they are much more likely to stick with it than other parents. The survey found 49 percent remain loyal to a brand despite cheaper options, compared with 30 percent of other parents. And 52 percent will remain loyal despite more convenient options, compared with 35 percent of other parents, and 64 percent will shop at a brand they are loyal to before looking at a competitor, compared with 54 percent of other parents.

This nationally representative survey targeted 3,002 U.S. adult consumers 18 or older between Jan. 30 and Feb. 18.



Lipman in the Community

The Lipman/TPE team in Kent, Washington just completed a wonderful volunteer service project last week. They may be small in numbers, but have huge hearts and it showed last Friday!

The team went into one of the neediest areas of their city to teach kids at the Kent Youth and Family Services organization about eating healthy using fruits and vegetables. They brought the ingredients and helped over 80 kids aged 3-18 years old make pico de gallo and guacamole, then gave them bags filled with all the ingredients to make it at home with their families. To round out the healthy and active message, they also gave soccer balls, basketballs, and footballs to the participating children.



PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



MAY CALENDAR

May-All Month

National Barbecue Month

May 4th

National Kids Fitness Day

May 5th

Cinco de Mayo

May 6th

International No Diet Day

May 9th

National Receptionists' Day

Duette, FL Weather

Fri May 4	Sat May 5	Sun May 6	Mon May 7	Tue May 8
89° F	90° F	91° F	90° F	89° F
66° F	70° F	70° F	70° F	70° F
ENE 10 MPH	NE 9 MPH	NNE 6 MPH	NNE 6 MPH	NNE 7 MPH
		Precip 40%	Precip 30%	Precip 40%

NEWS IN THE GROCERY TRADE

Fresh Items Still a Barrier to Online Sales

www.producenews.com, May 1, 2018

Adoption of online grocery shopping is moving at a slower pace than other consumer categories, but it's growing with about 10 percent of U.S. consumers now regularly buying groceries, reported The NPD Group. Although there are more consumers buying their groceries online, they haven't jumped all in. Nearly all online grocery shoppers (99 percent) still shop in brick-and-mortar grocery stores.

Consumer preferences when shopping for foods and beverages and logistical challenges are the primary reasons why consumers haven't gone all in on online grocery shopping. Wanting to pick out their own fresh items was the top barrier to their shopping online for groceries, followed by not wanting to pay a delivery fee. Many consumers (46 percent) who are lapsed online grocery shoppers or have never shopped online like that walking through a store remind them of what else they need. And, even though one of the key benefits of online shopping is speed, 46 percent of consumers who aren't online grocery shopping enthusiasts feel it's faster to go to the store.

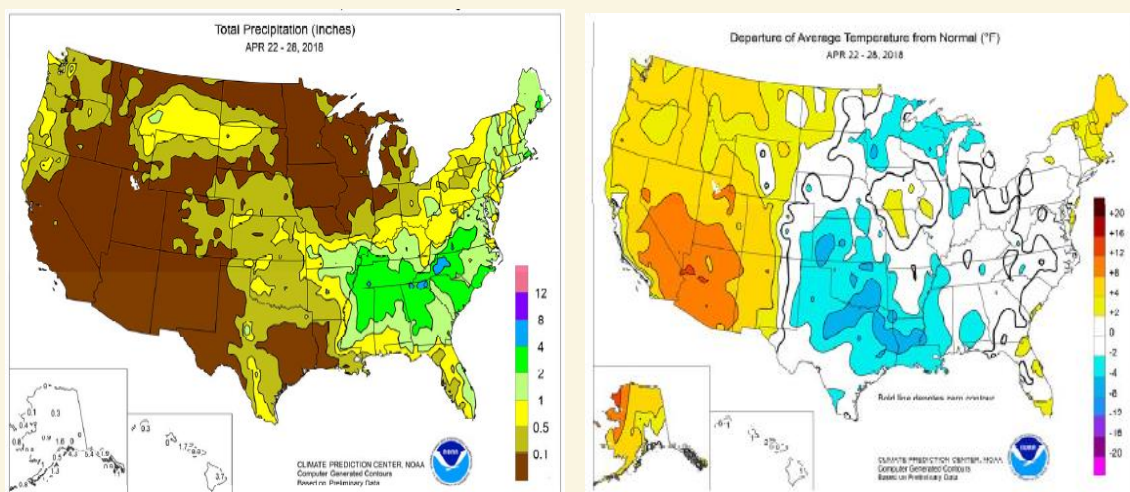
The benefits of online grocery shopping, like not needing to leave home, price comparisons, speed, and not having to wait in lines are enough for a growing number of consumers to be enticed, but not enough to get them to do all of their grocery shopping online. Groceries may in fact follow the same path as other categories, like electronics, where consumers still want to see the item up close and personal. Like electronics, often the answer is in an omnichannel approach, which many of the major grocers are now offering, reported NPD.

"With major brick-and-mortar grocery stores announcing click & collect and various speedy delivery options, the line between physical and online is blurring and, as a result, consumers are getting the best of both worlds," said Darren Seifer, NPD food and beverage industry analyst.

"There is also a place for pure-play ecommerce grocers but it looks like, as of now, consumers want a seamless experience between brick-and-mortar and e-commerce."

NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

In a Diverse World, Use These 4 Tips to Succeed

www.restaurant.org , May 1, 2018

The restaurant industry is home to a diverse workforce. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 47 percent of restaurant employees are minorities.

Among those employees, 25 percent are Hispanic, 12 percent are Black and 7 percent are Asian. In addition, four in 10 restaurant managers/supervisors and six in 10 chefs are minorities as well.

As our industry and customers become more diverse every year, it is important to educate ourselves and our employees in understanding diversity, says Gerry Fernandez, founder and CEO of the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (MFHA), a National Restaurant Association strategic partner since 2016. Being mindful and respectful about others' backgrounds and beliefs not only improves employee engagement, but customer service as well, he notes.

Fernandez says that practicing cultural intelligence is one of the best ways to achieve that goal. What is cultural intelligence? He defines it as having the knowledge and skills to effectively engage people from different cultural backgrounds and deliver better results. Here are Fernandez's four tips for operating successfully in a diverse workplace:

1. **Always seek clarity.** Be insightful and knowledgeable; don't make cultural assumptions about others
2. **Use a different vantage point to appreciate diversity.** If you see the world from someone else's perspective, you can better understand the cultural divide.
3. **Be intentional about wanting to learn.** Create effective cross-cultural communication. Read books, make time to meet with others to trade thoughts, ideas and insights that you and they may not have about each other.
4. **Don't accept stereotypes at face value.** Reach your own conclusions, and understand that differences are not deficiencies.

FRESH

TOMATOES



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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
PACK YOUR BAGS!**

May 19-22, 2018
National Restaurant Association Show 2018
McCormick Place
Chicago, IL
<http://show.restaurant.org>

May 20-22, 2018
Retail Dietician Exchange
McCormick Convention Hall
Chicago, IL
<http://winsight.cvent.com/events>

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