



**MARKET UPDATE**

**Tomatoes:** Eastern tomato production has, for the most part, transitioned to Florida for the year. The Quincy area is now past crown picks and is beginning to see some less-than-perfect quality on rounds. A few farms have started in the Ruskin/Palmetto area, with more expected to begin shipping over the next few weeks. Grape tomato supply out of North and Central Florida is ample, although there are some quality concerns due to previous rains. Romas are mostly coming from Quincy and Palmetto/Ruskin where fruit quality has been nice so far. Overall supply should continue to improve as we move into November and South Florida farms come to the table.

In the West, California is on the tail end of mature green tomato production for the year. Rounds are small with varied quality while romas are very nice but limited in supply. Depending on this weekend's rain, the deal could wrap up next week. Mexico is beginning to pick up the pace, as Baja breaks into Fall acreage and Eastern Mexico is at peak production on rounds and romas. Overall quality is good, although there are some sporadic concerns on older crops. Both Central Mexico and Baja are seeing increases in grape tomato supply as new growers get started with Fall plantings.

**Bell Peppers:** With Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida in the mix, bell pepper availability looks solid for the next few weeks in the East. As for the West, production is beginning to transition from multiple California areas to the desert and Mexico. The desert has just gotten started with crown picks and reports excellent quality. A few Sonora, Mexico growers have started crossing fruit already and we anticipate Mainland

Mexico ramping up in mid-November.

**Cucumbers:** Cucumbers are crossing at Nogales in solid numbers this week as growers enter a peak in production. Quality varies, as fruit from older fields continues to cross alongside fruit from newer production areas. Baja is also bringing nice numbers of quality fruit to market and should continue through November. In the East, Georgia is winding down and is expected to wrap up next week. Harvests have started in Central and South Florida areas, where supply will continue to improve over the next few weeks. Florida cucs look very nice so far.

**Summer Squash:** Georgia and Florida growers have steady volumes and good quality available on both yellow and zucchini this week. The West also has great availability and quality through Nogales. This could tighten up next week as we see the effects of farmers disking up fields due to low markets.

**Green Beans:** Beans have limited availability in both Eastern and Western markets this week. Georgia's crops are yielding 1/3 to 1/2 of normal levels due to disease pressure. North Florida farms have a few beans, but many plantings/areas were affected by this month's storm. Expect availability to remain extremely tight until growers in Southern Florida get going in a few weeks. While waiting on Mexican fruit to get up and going, the West has limited supply out of Fresno, Salinas, and the desert.

**Hard Squash:** Aside from some California storage crops, the majority of Western hard squash is coming in from Mainland Mexico through Nogales. Quality and sizing have been excellent. The East has ample product available, but quality continues to be a challenge, particularly on spaghetti.

**TRANSPORTATION FACTS**

\* The National Diesel Average remains stable this week at \$2.48 per gallon.

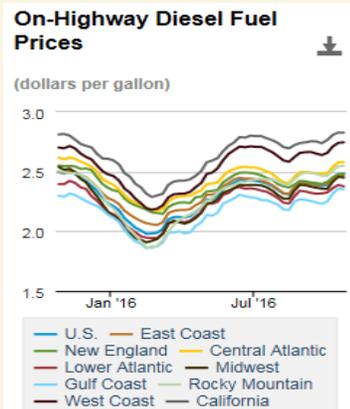
\* After experiencing significantly cheaper prices most of this year – vs- last, the average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is now only \$.02 less than the same time last year.

\* Pricing adjustments were mixed this week, with half of the reporting areas showing increases and the other half experiencing price decreases.

\* California has the highest-priced diesel fuel at \$2.83 and the Gulf Coast region offers the best bargain at \$2.35 per gallon.

\* The WTI Crude Oil price stands at \$49.96 per barrel this week.

\* Transportation is available in adequate supply throughout the country this week with a slight surplus of trucks in Central and South Florida.



Source: Energy Information Administration

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## News in the Grocery Trade

### Do You Walk the Talk?

By: Armand Lobato, [www.produceretailer.com](http://www.produceretailer.com), September 27, 2016

"Excuse me sir," a customer said, approaching the clerk stocking bananas. "Do you know anything about these mangoes? I've heard they're good but I've never bought one before. How do you tell when they're ripe? How do you cut them up?" The clerk, absorbed in his task, half smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"Beats me," he said. "I've never tried them myself." The shopper winced a little, shook her head, placed the fruit back on the display and walked away.

Some may think that customers don't need much help shopping your produce department. However, employees should have as much product knowledge as possible, because the more clerks know about fresh produce, the better on-floor salespeople they will be, which builds more than just sales and profit margin.

Here's a few thoughts about how to turn your crew into a dynamic sales team.

#### Recognize that product knowledge is a vital part of produce training

You train your clerks to unload trucks, to rotate, cull and stock produce. Why not teach them about the very heart of it all, the produce in front of them? Do they know what items should (and should not) be kept refrigerated? Do they know why grapes, plums or blueberries appear to have a frost-like film? Do they know what re-greening is in valencia oranges? Are your clerks aware that many fresh produce items have more than one name – such as bibb lettuce (aka butter or boston)? Can your clerks explain the difference between this lettuce and say, romaine, to a customer? Teach them something, every day.

#### Set a goal so clerks know at least the basics

With hundreds of fresh SKU's (stock keeping units) available in the produce department, a new clerk has a long way to go to become proficient. To start with, try to educate them on the basics: Which potato is best for potato salad, which onion is the sweetest. What items go together to make salsa. As time goes on and you're stocking together, you can take advantage of the time to explain more about

produce, maybe share a little history about how Frieda Caplan pioneered importing kiwifruit into the United States during the 1960's, for example. And that the fruit also previously was known by another name (chinese gooseberries) until Frieda put the fruit (and her name) on the produce map to stay.

#### Cultivate your clerk's curiosities

Listen to your clerks as they work. You might remark, "Did you ask, 'What's the big deal about seedless grapes? You know, these didn't start out this way. In fact, besides stocking seeded varieties, there used to be huge gaps in availability.'" Or if you overhear them talking about say, spaghetti squash. "You're right, the name is a bit odd, isn't it? It doesn't look like spaghetti, right?" You have to realize that many of your younger (or even some experienced clerks) handle fresh produce all day without knowing much about how to select, how to prepare, or even how something tastes.

That doesn't bode well when they're fielding questions from customers.

#### Offer samples at work

The quickest and simplest action is to offer your clerks a sample on the spot. "What makes this local corn unique is that it hasn't spent much time between harvest and shelf. That means the sugars haven't converted to starch and the result is the tenderest and sweetest corn around." Then peel back a husk and eat some raw. Some clerks will show surprise (don't you have to cook the corn?). The corn is of course, more acceptable after a short heating. But they'll be amazed at the texture and flavor – points that will transfer to inquiring customers on the sales floor. Same thing goes for any new or unfamiliar apple or tangerine variety. Cut up a few and let your crew have a little, on-the-job taste.

#### Offer samples as homework

"Gary, you asked about this – take home a spaghetti squash, no charge. Here's a recipe how to prepare, you'll soon see how it got its name. Take a couple of acorn squash while you're at it; serve these to your family. When you're done, I want to hear all about what you and yours think." This is a small price to pay for produce training.

Offer to send a clerk home with something they're unfamiliar with; napa cabbage or artichokes. You'd be surprised how many people haven't even tried some of the most basic produce items. A little investment will turn clerks into super-salespeople.

#### Demonstrate – be the leader

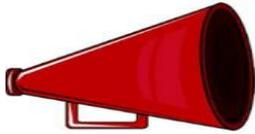
As much as possible, train while you're on the sales floor when discussing produce with shoppers. Wave them over as you demonstrate your own suggestive selling skills. "These are new crop golden delicious apples. They have a slightly spicy and sweet flavor. Did you know they make an excellent pie apple? They hold their shape well during cooking, and because they're naturally sweet you don't have to add much sugar that many recipes call for." Then at the same time cut an apple and offer a sample to the customer, and to your clerk.

#### Suggestive selling. Back to the mango example.

Consider how much different of an experience the customer might have had in the early, mango example, if the produce clerk been a little more knowledgeable. Properly trained, the clerk would have shared more than a little excitement. "Mangoes are the single most-eaten fruit in the world, and there's a reason why (as he selects one from the display). You can't judge them by the color, some of the best varieties don't have any blush. This is how to tell if they're ripe... (the clerk's trim knife comes out)...this is how you separate the wafer-like pit, and here's an easy way to cut and serve the fruit." After a quick demonstration and sample the customer will be impressed. Not only with how good the fruit is, but that the clerk took the time to explain and sample something. That's the kind of shopping experience that builds confidence and trust in a customer base, using just a small amount of time and expense.

Produce managers and their clerks are not only stockers; they direct, they advise and help customers. They're on-floor salespeople who, with a little enthusiasm and training, can also help build sales and gross profit.

There's a treasure trove of product knowledge out there. It's time to share the wealth.



## SPOTLIGHT ON LIPMAN Team Lipman Shouts Out

### Paul Peek General Manager Hendersonville, NC

As the GM, Paul is responsible for all facets of the NC operation from sales to production to transportation to food safety to customer service. Paul's favorite aspect of his job is that no two days are the same and each and every day brings new challenges. "I enjoy working in the fast-paced environment here and during my years here I have seen a lot of exciting changes come our way. I look forward to the new processing facility coming online this year. I'm fortunate to have a great group of people that pull it all together and make things work day in and day out. Even though Lipman has grown substantially over the last few years we still have the family atmosphere and culture which makes working that much more enjoyable."



### Tim Rogers Sales & Procurement Dallas, TX

Tim spends his work time selling mostly retail accounts and purchasing apples, all citrus, mangoes, squash, private label boxes and labels and working daily to keep our customers satisfied.

He enjoys working for the company because "Lipman is the total package. Our R&D experts are developing proprietary tomatoes with a great flavor profile. We have sustainability programs that are first in class as well as comprehensive food safety programs throughout our farming and packing operations. And, by supporting children and educational programs throughout the country, Lipman is truly making a difference."

## PRODUCE BAROMETER

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



## NOVEMBER CALENDAR

**All Month**  
National Pepper Month  
**November 1<sup>st</sup>**  
World Vegan Day  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
National Sandwich Day  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
National Stress Awareness Day

### Ruskin, FL Weather

Fri Oct 28	Sat Oct 29	Sun Oct 30	Mon Oct 31	Tue Nov 1	Wed Nov 2
84°F	84°F	84°F	84°F	84°F	81°F
66°F	66°F	64°F	64°F	70°F	70°F
ENE 15 MPH	ENE 11 MPH	NE 9 MPH	ENE 9 MPH	ENE 10 MPH	ENE 18 MPH
Averages 83°F/63°F	Averages 82°F/63°F	Averages 82°F/62°F	Averages 82°F/62°F	Averages 82°F/62°F	Averages 82°F/62°F

## An Apple a Day With Help of Fruits and Veggies, Weight Resolutions Should Start Now

By: Tom Karst, [www.thepacker.com](http://www.thepacker.com), October 4, 2016

You probably weigh less now than you will for any time during the entire year! If that doesn't make you feel good, I can relate. When I read that statement from the Food & Brand Lab at the University of Cornell website, I resisted the implication. The message is simply this - you are about to pack on the pounds over the next three months. Wait a second, I don't feel particularly "light" now; what will I feel like in three months?

From the article called "Make an October Weight Resolution , - The Weight You Gain before the New Year can Take 5 Months to Lose!" came this insight:

*Research findings just published in the New England Journal of Medicine show that the weight you gain in the next 3 months can take over 5 months to lose. From their analysis of the weight patterns of nearly 3,000 individuals, researchers found that in the US, weight patterns begin rising around Thanksgiving and peak around Christmas and the New Year. It isn't until after Easter (about 5 months later) that weight patterns even out, with only slight fluctuations between April and November. The researchers also analyzed yearly weight patterns in Germany and Japan. Similar to the US, those in Germany weighed the most around the Christmas/New-Year period and those in Japan weighed the most during Golden Week in April – a major Japanese holiday. Each country also showed a peak in weight for New Year's.*

*"Everyone gains weight over the holidays — Americans, Germans, Japanese," explains co-author Brian Wansink, Cornell Food and Brand Lab Director and author of Slim by Design, "Instead of making a New Year's Resolution, make an October resolution. It's easier to avoid holiday pounds altogether than to lose them after they happen."*

The sober reality of this research could help Americans eat more fruits and veggies now to stave off extra pounds, rather than wait until after Jan. 1. How can the industry boost the awareness to pack on less pounds by eating more healthy fruits and vegetables?

A quick Google search pointed to several articles that have explored the issue. Here are a few:

Rapid weight loss by eating fruits and veggies ([www.livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com))

Best fruits and vegetables for weight loss ([cosmopolitan.com](http://cosmopolitan.com))

How To Speed Up Weight Loss - High Daily Intake Of Fruits, Vegetables, Greens and Beans Can Help You Take Control ([peertrainer.com](http://peertrainer.com))

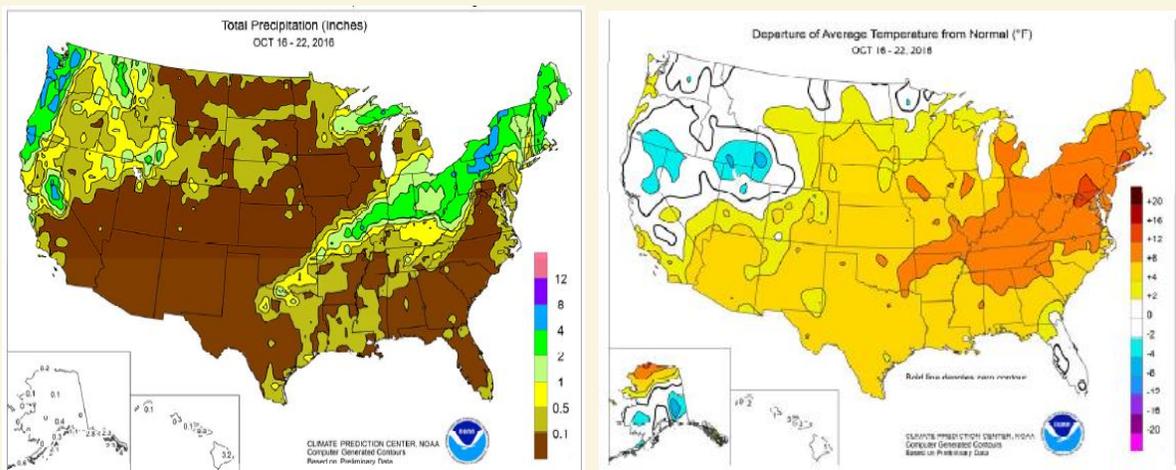
These Fruits and Vegetables Are Linked to Weight Loss ([Time.com](http://Time.com))

The top 7 fruits that will guarantee weight loss ([msn.com](http://msn.com))

It is a little disconcerting that no web references showed up in the top page of Google searches from sources like the Produce for Better Health Foundation and other fresh produce promotion bodies. Why isn't the industry more active in this space, explicitly speaking to the weight loss benefits of fresh produce consumption? Given the research conclusions we clearly need some dietary advice headed to the pound-packing holiday season.

## NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT

### Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation



## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY NEWS

### Is Sustainability on Your Menu?

[www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org), October 24, 2016

Food trends, energy and water conservation, food waste reduction and supply chain sourcing were a few of the topics discussed at our first-ever Sustainability Executive Study Group meeting. (National Restaurant Association)

The meeting, held Oct. 19, brought together restaurant sustainability experts, industry suppliers and manufacturers and non-governmental organizations. They talked about Americans' growing interest in sustainability, how that's changing consumer behavior, and what it means for restaurants. Here are a few takeaways:

#### Emerging trends

Arin Wasserman, founder of Changing Tastes and one of the restaurant industry's sustainability pioneers, explained that as consumer tastes change, many diners are looking for more plant-based, non-processed foods. They also want smaller portions of higher-quality foods, especially fish, meat and poultry. "More consumers are interested ... in what they're putting into their bodies and how it makes them feel." They don't want toxins or pesticides, desire less industrialization and expect companies to pay more attention to social-justice issues, he said.

#### Energy and water conservation

Managing utility expenses efficiently can be an important way to manage costs in a challenging business environment, said the Foodservice Technology Center's Richard Young. His center estimates that commercial foodservice operators pay about \$40 billion a year for energy. Even a 1 percent cutback would yield a collective savings to the industry of \$400 million, he noted.

#### Food waste reduction

LeanPath's Andrew Shakman, the U.S. Composting Council's Frank Franciosi and Feeding America's Carrie Calvert focused on source reduction, composting and food donation. Shakman said he believes consumers are changing the way they perceive food waste and that the foodservice industry, along with non-governmental agencies and public policy leaders, are working to increase that awareness. Franciosi said a lack of compost-manufacturing infrastructure could be due to the "ick factor" the public associates with composting. Calvert said implementing donation programs at restaurants would ensure that excess food goes toward feeding those in need. She added that new federal tax incentives, along with technology tools created by Feeding America, could help address some barriers restaurants face with donation programs.

#### Supply chain and sustainable sourcing

Sodexo North America's Richard Rosen talked about sustainable sourcing and packaging issues. Rosen said everyone attending the meeting probably has a different idea of what sustainability means -- and that it's probably driven by customer or client demand. Dyer told the group that the belief that landfills are overflowing with foodservice packaging is false. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, it only constitutes 2 percent.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS!

#### November 14-16, 2016

United Fresh Brandstorm  
Hilton San Francisco Financial District  
San Francisco, CA  
[www.unitedfresh.org/events](http://www.unitedfresh.org/events)

#### January 24-26, 2017

The Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Supply Show of the Southeast  
Myrtle Beach Convention Center  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
[www.hmrsss.com](http://www.hmrsss.com)

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