

JULY 5, 2024

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updates

# CROP & MARKET INDUSTRY INFO





# MARKET UPDATES

## ROMA TOMATOES

We've almost made it through the Eastern gap in roma production. A few romas have been harvested so far in the NC/TN mountain region but volume is still minimal. We're about 10 days out from the larger volumes in TN starting and other growers that have already started getting into volume. The West has romas available in both MX and CA. Rain in central MX has put pressure on Baja's supply which has been fairly steady and moderate. CA growers, including Lipman, are up and running now with consistent supply. CA romas are grown differently, so it is difficult to compare them with fruit from other areas, but quality has been mostly good despite a little gold-fleck and a some scarring.

## ROUND TOMATOES

Lipman's SC round tomato crops are finished up and we're waiting on the VA season to get going in the next 3-5 days. There have been a few growers in the TN/NC region that have started in a light way, but the bulk of the crops in this area will get rolling in the next 7-10 days. Looking to the West- most all growers in CA's central valley have started. Lipman plans its first harvest in Los Banos in the early part of the week. For the most part, quality has been average with a little scarring, catface, and shape issues from the majority of growers. With the current heat wave in place, we could see the current sizing mix decline in the coming weeks as well. MX has fruit available in central MX and Baja, with the stronger volumes in Baja where it's still mostly big fruit.

## GRAPE TOMATOES

Grape tomato supply is on the light side this week as production transitions are underway. Lipman has finished up in SC and is now harvesting in VA. We've just gotten started, but do expect to see more consistent volumes in 5-7 days. In the meantime, there are a handful of local deals that have started in western NC. Western supply is primarily coming from Baja and central MX. This week's numbers are lighter out of both areas. Central MX's volumes and quality have been impacted by weather.

## GREEN BEANS

GA and the eastern shore of NC finished up this week, so we're now looking to VA, MI and IN for green bean supply. Overall, there's been enough available to meet demand, but things may

feel a bit more snug in the next week or two as VA winds down and we wait for other programs to build volume. Quality has been mostly good with only an occasional issue. In the West, volumes have picked up from both the CA and central MX growing areas as warm weather has spurred along the fruit. However, we could see some concerns down the road from the current/upcoming extreme heat. The NW, including our WA state program, is also up and running, with most of their product meeting local demand.

## COLOR BELL PEPPERS

Colored bell pepper supply looks to remain on the light side for the next 3-4 weeks. CAN's weather has improved and there seems to be a few more around this week, but overall volume will be less than normal for the rest of the season due to crops being pulled out for disease concerns. Quality remains strong, but there's not a lot of medium or large sizing and bushel packs are extremely short. Looking to the south, central MX's numbers have been steady but light. Production is expected to pick up when new crops begin at the end of July/early August.

## GREEN BELL PEPPERS

With GA now out of the picture, bell pepper production is migrating north for the summer. Our eastern NC crop has been providing good supply, sizing and quality for the past few weeks, but expects to see volume drop off for the remaining 2-3 weeks of the season as high temperatures are impacting production. NJ just started peppers this week and should be online in a more substantial way in the coming week. Quality has been a little rough on the earliest picks, but looks to clean up well after the initial harvests. MI will be the next area with bigger volumes and they are still about 2 weeks out. We'll also see various local programs spring up between now and the 1st of August. In the West, the Fresno/Selma area is now the spot for peppers as they have great quality and sizing. Bakersfield is still going, but fruit is sizing down and there have been reports of some shape and sunscald issues. Looking ahead- we expect to see WA state come online in the last week of July/1st week of August.

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## YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

As is the norm for this time of year, squash production is scattered about through the East. There's fruit in many states, but MI, NJ, and soon NY are the locations with more volume. Quality varies by grower and area. NJ has had a run of lesser quality due to heat and rain, but will see things clean up in the next 4-7 days. In the West, Santa Maria continues to provide consistent volumes, while Baja, MX is finally starting to see some production increases. Santa Maria may see a decline in production in 2-3 weeks as they transition between blocks but supply should continue to be adequate. WA state also has some nice squash although most of it is staying close to meet local demand.

## CUCUMBERS

Super cucumbers are very challenging this week as the majority of the current harvests are grading as selects. NJ still has decent volumes and quality, but other production areas (PA, MI) are still light and dealing with early-crop challenges. We should start to see cucumbers out of NY and a few other local areas over the next 7-10 days, which will provide at least some additional supply. Moderate to good volumes are available in the West from Baja and central MX. We do expect to see a little less volume in central MX over the coming week as crops respond to recent weather. Overall, quality is good but is a little stronger out of Baja.

## HARD SQUASH

There are still a few hard squash in GA, but we are now starting to see some of the local/regional deals get up and running. NJ has light volumes of acorn, spaghetti and buttercup thus far, but is still waiting for butternuts to come online. KY is also up and running with acorn and spaghetti- butternuts to follow by the 15th. As we move into August, we should see NY, VA, PA and a few others come online for the season. In the West, hard squash is available in the Fresno, Bakersfield, & Selma areas where all three varieties are available with nice, clean quality.

## EGGPLANT

With GA still in the game and eastern NC and NJ starting, Eastern eggplant supply looks good for the next several weeks. NJ just got started and volume is minimal, but we'll see production build going into the next week. In addition, July is the time that several local deals (KY, VA, etc.) get underway with eggs. The West has steady supply out of the Fresno area. Quality has been great and production is expected to stay at similar levels for the next few weeks.

## CHILI PEPPERS

Chili peppers are relatively short in the East as they are in very few hands this week. There are some left in GA, a few in NC, and a few small spots of local product but most only have a few varieties. MI will be one of the few places that has the whole product line when they get underway in 2-3 weeks. We'll also see small local deals pop up in July and August in locations like western NC, KY, PA, and NY. In the West, chilies are available in CA and MX. CA's fruit is coming from the Selma/Fresno area. Most growers don't offer the full mix, but a few do and their quality has been excellent. Baja is still in the early stages of the season with light volume and only select varieties available. There has been some improvement this week and another grower is on tap to start next week, so we should see more supply options/items in Baja. Meanwhile, over in central MX, production has been pretty consistent, but volumes and quality will likely be affected by rain & weather over the next few weeks, especially on poblanos.

## MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Mini sweets are extremely short. Mainland MX has finally finished up and we're basically waiting for Baja to start in late July. There have been a few handfuls available out of CA and CAN but there's not nearly enough to go around which means the next few weeks could be a challenging supply period. The next few weeks could be a challenging supply period.. WA state should come online around August 15th which will definitely help in the NW.

## ORGANIC ROMA

Only two growers are going in Baja right now, which means supply is still pretty snug. However, more will come online over the next 3-5 weeks and we expect more consistent numbers by August. Quality has been good from the new crops.

## ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Organic grape tomatoes are primarily a Baja deal now. Production seems to be a bit lighter this week, but quality is on point.

## ORGANIC MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Organic mini sweets are slowly coming back into production as there are now two growers up and running in Baja. Volumes are still very light, but we should see production pick up in 10-14 days. Quality is good, but there is some of the typical greening and the color mix is still not where it needs to be.

## ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

Organic mini cucumber supply is moderate, with the majority of the product coming from Baja and lesser amounts in central MX. We're having to watch carefully for shriveled and dehydrated product as handling and harvesting in warm temperatures can impact fruit quality and ability to travel.



## WATERMELON

Watermelon production is now centered in GA and SC. Quality has been good and volume is in full swing. As we move further into July, we'll see some smaller regional deals also get up and running.



## THE HEAT IS ON FOR HATCH CHILI PEPPER SEASON

[PRODUCEMARKETGUIDE.COM](https://www.producemarketguide.com)

by [Armand Lobato](#), Jun 28, 2024

When the waiter walks briskly by your table, what he's carrying may be the best food ad of all. You know, the sizzle.

It may be a freshly seared steak or a freshly made batch of piping-hot fajitas.

If it sizzles, it gets everyone's mouthwatering. It gets noticed. After all, most of the senses are engaged: sight, smell, when the server brushes by (that's touch), and of course, the sound — that telltale, off-the-grill sound.

It's sort of like in the classic poem "The Odyssey" with Homer's account of how the sirens' song was of temptation; the luring sound of the sizzle is irresistible.

What does all this mean for produce retailers? It's almost time for Hatch chili pepper roasting season. The crackling, aromatic popping and sizzling that lures shoppers ever closer to watch, to absorb the sensory moment — and to buy.

Many years ago, I scratched out a [10-Minute Merchandiser piece](#) with more details in The Packer's Produce Retailer Magazine (now Produce Market Guide), merchandising summer's hottest commodity.

The famous chili peppers from Hatch Valley, N.M., will soon be in harvest from around early August to late September. Especially in the western states, vendors start sprouting up along street corners. Their welded, cage-like barrels spin slowly over propane-fueled burners while within them the chili peppers roll, crackle, dance and tumble as the chilies' skin begins to char to perfection.

Regular chili pepper customers already know this, but to the uninitiated, advise them to repack the chilies, with charred skin on, into Ziploc-type bags and store in the freezer until needed.

If your chain or store chooses to set up a roasting station area on your lot or front sidewalk, it's a big commitment, but it's also a powerful draw. Customers are drawn to the aromatic smoke. They love the theater, and your store can drive sales and make a lot of new friends.

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## INDUSTRY GROUPS WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE PRODUCE PACKAGING GUIDELINES BY DECEMBER 2025

[PRODUCEMARKETGUIDE.COM](https://www.producemarketguide.com)

BY THE PACKER STAFF, JUN 27, 2024

Western Growers and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association have launched a working group to address the evolving landscape of packaging requirements imposed by both governments and retailers throughout North America.

Dozens of grower associations from across North America convened to discuss the current state of produce packaging and outline goals for the Sustainable Produce Packaging Alignment for North America, according to a news release.

SPPA will develop unified guidelines for use across the North American fresh produce supply chain, with a target completion date of December 2025.

“Packaging is key to ensuring the quality, affordability and safety of fresh produce,” Western Growers President and CEO Dave Puglia said in the release. “Consumers are requesting high-quality fresh produce from our growers and changes in packaging. As such, the industry is facing new and aggressive demands from both the public and private sector — demands that are often in conflict with each other, and don’t fully recognize industry realities and progress. The intersection of sustainability with packaging must be addressed for the continued trade with our most important partners and continued availability of nutritious foods for consumers.”

“Packaging plays a critical role in enabling the sustainability of North American and global fresh produce supply chains, said CPMA President Ron Lemaire.

“The trend of diverging market and regulatory packaging requirements is a significant risk to fresh produce supply chains, hence the strategic importance of developing and adopting North American guidelines for fresh produce packaging,” he said in the release.

Western Growers and CPMA are actively engaged on the Environment and Climate Change Canada's pre-proposal to constrain allowable fresh produce packaging in Canadian grocery stores, the release said. The ECCC is currently advocating for a significant reduction in produce plastic packaging, demanding that 75% of all produce be sold in bulk or non-plastic packaging by 2026, increasing to 95% by 2028.

The SPPA project plans to develop industry-focused analysis, white papers and web tools on fresh produce packaging technology for U.S. specialty crop growers; host workshops to educate and align stakeholders; organize technical working group meetings to leverage industry expertise to craft the tools above; and launch a public-facing resource to inform stakeholders on how to use the guide once it becomes available, the release said.

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# UPCOMING EVENTS:

JULY 10-11, 2024

**ORGANIC PRODUCE SUMMIT**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

BOOTH #800

SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2024

**SOUTHERN INNOVATIONS**

NASHVILLE, TN

OCTOBER 17-19, 2024

**THE GLOBAL PRODUCE & FLORAL SHOW**

ATLANTA, GA

HAPPY 4TH OF JULY FROM LIPMAN  
FAMILY FARMS! CELEBRATE WITH THE  
FRESH FLAVORS OF SUMMER.  
WHETHER YOU'RE AT A PICNIC OR

FIRING UP THE GRILL, DON'T FORGET  
TO ADD LIPMAN'S DELICIOUS  
TOMATOES TO YOUR SPREAD!



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