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ON THE H O R I Z O N

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weekly industry
updates

CROP & MARKET INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

With TN and NC roma crops well underway, Eastern roma supply has strengthened. It's not yet at optimal levels, as there have been a lot of rainy days in the past few weeks (10 days a row in western NC). Rain has hampered harvests and impacted quality to some extent, but Lipman's TN fruit quality is faring better than most as we're seeing good packouts and quality. More rain-free days should be on tap for August which will allow production and quality to resume to normal levels in the region. Moving to the West, growers in CA are seeing the results of July's excessive heat in terms of bloom drop, yields, sizing and quality but there are still decent volumes. Lipman's Manteca crops are still producing pretty good sizing, but we have been grading out some sun damage. We expect to see our crops lighten up in the 3rd week of August due to bloom drop. If the heat continues, we could see the lighter industry volumes continue further into the season. MX's roma volumes continue to be on the light side as southern growers in Baja have finished up and East/Central MX is still in a limited mode due to weather.

ROUND TOMATOES

Round tomato production is underway in TN and NC, but the seasonally strong volumes have yet to kick in. Persistent rains have affected harvest schedules and caused a few rain-related quality issues but supply has been relatively consistent this week. Lipman's VA farms have finished up crown picks for the early season. Depending on quality, we may have some 2nds to harvest, but VA will be in a very light mode until Fall crops start back in September. As for the West, CA's volumes have been lighter this week. Many growers are struggling with sizing and heat-related quality issues, depending on their location (s). Lipman's crops are in better shape than most, but we have also been losing more product in the packing process due to sun damage. However, our sizing is on the bigger side due to the varieties we plant and we've got mostly XL and larger tomatoes to offer. MX's production remains light as southern Baja growers finish up and Eastern/Central MX farms are in a light mode due to weather.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Lipman's grape tomato production in VA is lighter now but steady. There's been a lot of rain on the product but the fruit has taken it really well. Quality has been consistently good after a

few days of issues last week. Other small local deals also have grapes, but volumes are light and mostly staying local. Western supply is moderate with the majority of fruit coming from Baja and lesser amounts out of central MX. No major quality issues have been reported.

GREEN BEANS

Overall green bean supply is light throughout the country. Heat, rain, and lighter acreage have impacted Eastern availability. Supply has been hit or miss over the past week out of NY, PA, VA and MI. CA growing districts have also been impacted by heat and volume has been on the light side. Our local partner in WA state hit a gap between plantings during the past week, but will start a new planting in the next few days.

COLOR BELL PEPPERS

Colored bell pepper availability is still on the shy side. Both Ontario and British Columbia continue in lighter than normal production for this time of year. There's been a little more in BC this week, but definitely no excess. On a positive note for BC, sizing has worked its way down to where there's more XL available and quality has been mostly good. Central MX's production has been consistent, but we haven't seen the expected push in volumes yet. With another grower coming online, we should see more from the south in 10-14 days.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Bell pepper supply is improving in the East! NJ is back into a more normal production mode while MI, OH and PA are gaining momentum. Quality has been good from most areas, with an occasional issue from smaller local deals in the south that have experienced a lot of rain. In the West, CA's Central Valley continues in a light mode thanks to hot weather and bloom drop. We expect this area to have ups and downs in volume in the coming weeks, as the bloom drop effects come and go. Fortunately, our WA state partner is now underway to help with supply in the northwest. The plants are very healthy but the first harvests had quite a bit of sunscald and #2 fruit in them. Once we move into the next fruit sets, volume and quality should make significant improvements.

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YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Squash is readily available in the East from many areas. Northern areas are in the peak of production while we have seen things lighten up a little for some further south due to heat and rain. Overall, quality is pretty good although there are always some hit or miss concerns on yellows. In the West, several areas in CA and Baja are in good production with nice quality. Yellows are less available than zucchini, as most Western growers have lighter acreage of yellow squash. Our local WA state program has finished for the season.

CUCUMBERS

The Eastern cucumber situation is similar to last week- adequate, but lighter supply than normal for this time of year as many growers/areas have reduced acreage. NY, OH, NJ, PA and MI are all in production with mostly good quality. There are also some small local deals with product scattered about. Moving to the West, cucumbers are readily available with most of it coming out of Baja and central MX. Baja's numbers are a little lighter this week after coming out of a flush but there's still plenty of fruit. We've been seeing a few more growers bring cucumbers into Nogales, but quality must be evaluated closely as there's some product with age on it in the system.

HARD SQUASH

Hard squash is pretty snug in the East this week. KY is in between plantings and a few weeks away from their stronger Fall volumes. With some crop loss in NC due to rain and MI not fully online, supply is likely to remain at lighter levels for another week or two. As we move into August, NY and PA will add to the mix. By the end of August/early September, we should see stronger seasonal volumes from all production areas. In the West, hard squash is available in both Selma and Stockton as well as in WA state. Quality has been good although sizing is a little challenging in WA due to heat.

EGGPLANT

Although our eastern NC program has wrapped up a little earlier than planned for the season, eggplant supply is more than adequate in the East. MI and NJ are harvesting and there's a plethora of smaller local deals in production. Overall, quality has been solid from most all areas. Supply is definitely light in the West. The heat has taken its toll on CA crops, which means supply is likely to remain snug and quality subpar for the immediate future. Fortunately, our WA state partner has healthy plants and beautiful fruit which is helping us in the northwest.

CHILI PEPPERS

MI is just getting started in a light way with chilies as are a few local deals in NY, PA, etc. There's no real volume in any particular spot and some growers don't cover the full line so one-stop shopping is a challenge in the East. As for the West, production is pretty steady in Baja and central MX, but has slowed down significantly in CA thanks to the temperature situation. Good volumes are available on jalapenos, tomatillos and serranos; moderate numbers on poblanos and Anaheims; and low production of habaneros. With the size and shape of habaneros, they are very susceptible to decay after rain, which has been the case in central MX. Our WA state program will help cover business in the northwest as they are now up and running on jalapenos, serranos, tomatillos and Anaheims. Poblanos to come next week and habaneros are a little further out with a projected start date of September 1.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS

One grower is up and running with mini sweets in Baja now. Their supply has been consistent but they do not have enough fruit to go around. The elevated market has caused some organic growers to pack as conventional which has helped during the supply gap. WA state should start in another 10-14 days, which will provide relief in the Northwest.

ORGANIC ROMA

Good quality organic romas have been tough to come by this week. Supply is limited to mostly field-grown product in Baja and quality issues (shrivel, soft, high color, etc.) have been prevalent. We've learned that some Baja growers skipped plantings that would have come off in August and September and won't return to production until October. In the meantime, some new crops should come online in central MX in another 10-14 days.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Supply is a little better on organic grapes this week, especially on clamshell packs. Most of the fruit is coming out of Baja, where quality has been strong. There are also some organic grapes in central MX.

ORGANIC MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Organic mini sweet supply has been steady out of Baja. We may see a slight downturn in volume over the next few weeks, but supply should remain adequate. Quality has been nice.

ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

Organic mini cucumbers are available in Baja and central MX. Quality has been consistent and good overall.



WATERMELON

With IN, NJ, NC and everywhere in between in production, watermelon supply continues to be adequate. The stronger volumes are now coming out of NC, MO, IN and the Delmarva areas. Quality can be varied by growing area and stage of the crop, but is good overall.



THE REASONS BEHIND THE PAINFUL SURGE IN GROCERY PRICES

ANDNOWUKNOW.COM

Tue. July 30th, 2024 - by [Peggy Packer](#)

UNICOI, TN - Lipman Family Farms is funneling even more strength into its farming network, announcing the addition of Unicoi, Tennessee-based Jones & Church Farms.

"The Jones & Church team has always provided top-quality product and been honorable and sincere partners, offering the best tomatoes in the country between the months of July-October," said Elyse Lipman, Chief Executive Officer at Lipman Family Farms. "Now, our companies and families are joining forces. Together as Lipman, we are positioned stronger than ever to provide year-round supply to our customers with an expert team."

This acquisition underscores Lipman's unwavering commitment to family farming, sustainable practices, and the expansion of fresh produce availability throughout the United States, a press release explained.

Jones & Church and Lipman Family Farms have been close partners since 1996 when they started buying

and marketing their tomatoes after the opening of Custom Pak, Lipman's repack operations. This partnership later became instrumental in Lipman's seasonal supply in the East.

"This partnership is a wonderful continuation of my father's legacy," said Renea Jones, whose parents, Carl and Sue Jones, started Jones & Church alongside Buckley and Charlene Church. "Our families have shared values and a deep respect for the land and community, making this union a perfect fit. We are excited about the future and the opportunities it brings for our farm and the local community."

Jones & Church Farms is now entering its third generation, continuing its legacy of growing Romas and round tomatoes during the July-October growing season. By investing in this critical tomato location and season, Lipman is doubling down on its commitment to supplying stable, year-round produce to its customers.

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SIT, SMOKE AND TALK: A LOOK AT PRODUCE LABOR PLANNING

THEPACKER.COM

BY [ARMAND LOBATO](#) JULY 11, 2024

I was putting the final touches on some upcoming travel plans when I saw Russ T. Blade push his way out from behind my desk calculator. “Rusty,” as regular readers know, is the miniature, imaginary produce manager who occasionally appears to talk shop.

Rusty: United Airlines, huh? I thought you were the Southwest, discount-type of traveler.

Me: Normally yes. I had to use the Friendly Skies sky-bus this go-round. That reminds me of my college statistics professor. He used United as an example to drive home a point.

Rusty: What, the ongoing statistic of how air travel is so much safer? Even in the wake of the few planes lately in the news, which descended to near-disastrous low altitudes?

Me: No, but thanks for bringing that up — very reassuring. No, the teacher recalled how United hired the company he worked for to determine statistically how best to board an airplane. After performing time-study experiments, his company determined that United should board from the back to the front of the plane in steps — window passengers first, followed by middle seat occupants, then aisle-seated folks — instead of going through the usual order of travel classes.

Rusty: And first-class passengers boarding last? Bet that went over like a lead balloon.

Me: Pretty much. United scrapped those recommendations and kept boarding how they always do. However, United still had to pay the statistics organization a lump of money. Even though the back-to-front method was deemed the most efficient method.

Rusty: That reminds me of the old SST program we tried in our grocery chain decades ago.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2024

SOUTHERN INNOVATIONS

NASHVILLE, TN

OCTOBER 17-19, 2024

THE GLOBAL PRODUCE & FLORAL SHOW

ATLANTA, GA

COOL DOWN WITH THIS LIGHT,
REFRESHING TREAT. A
WATERMELON SORBET IS A
PERFECT SUMMER SPLASH OF
FLAVOR! TRY OUR LIPMAN FAMILY
FARMS RECIPE, AND LET US KNOW
WHAT YOU THINK! 🍉🍦☀️



QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEWSLETTER? EMAIL: MAGGIE.BARTHOLOW@LIPMANFAMILYFARMS.COM