

OCTOBER 18, 2024

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ON THE H O R I Z O N

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updates

CROP & MARKET

INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

For all practical purposes, there is no Eastern roma supply this week. There are still a few handfuls here and there but nothing of significance. Quincy is anticipated to start within the next week which will provide a small amount of supply. But, the yields on Quincy's light acreage are anticipated to be down significantly due to the effects of Hurricane Helene. Beyond Quincy, Florida's supply situation is still in the assessment stages. At this point, we can expect Florida to have light production with some quality and sizing concerns for at least the short term. As for the West, their light volumes continue to be highly sought-after this week. California will see volume drop off significantly in the next 5-7 days as several growers finish up the season. A few expect to go until the end of October, weather willing. Baja growers are transitioning between Summer and Fall crops and should see a little more volume next week when one more grower gets started. Central/Eastern Mexico supply has its ebbs and flows but is overall light with some substandard quality.

ROUND TOMATOES

Eastern round tomato supply is very light. Lipman's Virginia farm will finish up over the weekend with some 2nds and 3rds, leaving round tomatoes to areas further south. Quincy is on tap to start up in the next 7-10 days, but this area's acreage is limited and they anticipate lighter yields this season, as with romas. Beyond Quincy, Florida's supply situation is still in the assessment stages. At this point, we can expect Florida to have light production with some quality and sizing concerns for a short to intermediate time frame. Out West, California fruit is sizing down as the end of the season approaches. One grower finished this week and two more will end their seasons next week. Lipman and one other grower may be able to go another 7-10 days, then harvests will wrap up for this area's season. Baja's production is in transition between Summer and Fall crops with limited volumes and smaller sizing at this time. We should see a little more volume next week as another grower starts their Fall plantings. Overall, Mexico's quality is average at this time.

GRAPE TOMATOES

As with other tomato items, Eastern grape tomato supply is light. Lipman's Virginia crops have now finished. There is light supply in central and south Florida this week, but the longer term supply situation is still being assessed. In the West, grapes are available in Baja and Central/Eastern Mexico. Baja should continue at moderate levels as the Summer to Fall crop transition takes place, as two new areas are on tap to start in the next 7-10 days. Eastern/Central Mexico production areas should have moderate volumes for the next few weeks, although they have been experiencing a lot of peaks and valleys this season.

GREEN BEANS

Eastern green bean production continues to be extremely limited, with only small volumes coming from Virginia and Georgia. Virginia is in the short rows of the season and will likely finish up in the next few days. Georgia has experienced significant crop damage from prior storms and only has a small percentage of their normal supply. Florida's situation is still under assessment, but we have heard that several growers have had to replant so start dates will most likely be delayed in multiple areas. In the West, green bean production is also very snug, with light volumes coming from Santa Maria and Santa Ana, and a handful coming into Nogales from Sonora and Central Mexico. The California season is almost at its end and we don't expect to see significant volumes out of Mexico until mid-November when Sinaloa gets started. The Washington state program has now finished for the season. Overall, supply looks to be challenging for at least the next several weeks.

COLOR BELL PEPPERS

With 4-5 weeks remaining in the season (pending favorable weather), both Eastern and Western Canada are seeing volumes lighten up but remain at adequate levels. Quality is still good, although there are occasional issues reported likely due to aging crops. Central Mexico has been experiencing some ups and down in volume, but generally has adequate supply. With the tightening green bell situation, some growers may be enticed to harvest fruit as greens to capitalize on markets which could change the mix of availability in the near future.

EGGPLANT

Eggplant availability is light in the East but there seems to be enough to go around.. Lipman's North Carolina farm will work another week and has had nice quality to offer. There are also eggs available in Georgia and Florida, and a few remaining in New Jersey. No major quality issues have been reported from these areas but there have been a few trouble lots here and there. In the West, supply continues to come from the Fresno area with mixed quality. Fresno is expected to run through the rest of the month, when production will transition to the California desert. We are seeing just a few eggs come out of Sonora this week, but the majority of Mexican volume isn't expected to come online until mid-November when Sinaloa gets started.

CHILI PEPPERS

With most local chili pepper programs finishing up and Michigan nearing its season's end, the Eastern supply of chili peppers is quite limited. Although some crops were affected by Hurricane Helene, Georgia is expected to start producing in the next few weeks. We're still awaiting updates from the Plant City area, but production of the mainline chilies in South Florida should also begin in the coming weeks. In the West, jalapeno volumes are strong, with light to moderate availability of other chili varieties. Baja's crops are expected to continue for another 4-6 weeks, overlapping with the Nogales season, though quality from Baja is now average, with some items not holding up as well during transit. Nogales is already seeing some chilies from Sonora, with volumes set to improve as more growers come online. Washington State continues to provide excellent supply and quality, with no frost expected for at least 15 days, allowing this program to potentially extend through the remainder of the month.

ORGANIC ROMA

Organic roma tomatoes are available in adequate supply and are mostly coming out of Central Mexico. Quality has been good although any lots with high color may be suspect.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Baja is still the primary supply area for organic grape tomatoes. Quality has been average with some occasional issues with color and shrivel. There's also a few coming out of Central Mexico, but volume is minimal. We won't see harvests transition to Mainland Mexico until December.

ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

Organic mini cucumber availability has been slightly stronger this week, as supplies ebb and flow. Quality has been good, but there has been a portion of the product that is a bit longer than some customer specs allow.

WATERMELON

South Carolina continues to have moderate watermelon volumes this week with mostly 45 ct fruit and good quality. We will see volume and sizing decline as we move through the next several days and approach the season's end. Central Florida is on tap to start in 5-7 days. These crops weathered Hurricane Milton, but we and other growers are still assessing its effects on yields and quality. Southern Florida is expected to begin around November 1st.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Overall, bell pepper supply is very snug this week. The East has a few light pockets of supply, but no area with substantial volume. Michigan still had a few but a season-ending freeze has taken out that supply. There's also still a little coming out of Canada. Georgia normally has good supply this time of year, but yields and quality have been impacted by previous storms, limiting their supply. There will be some pepper in Florida eventually, but damages are still being assessed as it takes some time to see how remaining plants "grow out." The West has light supply coming from northern California and their season looks to wind down over the next few weeks. Quality remains good, especially with fresh fruit. Production will transition to the Coachella area in the next 7-10 days for their short season. Meanwhile, a few peppers have started trickling in from Sonora but we won't see big volumes out of Mexico until Sinaloa starts in mid-late November. Unfortunately, our Washington state program came to an abrupt end due to an unexpected frost.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

There's been a mostly adequate supply of squash in the East this week, but there are quality issues reducing availability for some needs. Our Eastern North Carolina farm will have fruit for the next 5-7 days but will finish up then, leaving squash in Georgia and Florida's hands. Georgia has had decent volumes, but quality has varied. There is also some squash in south Florida currently, but the longer term outlook for the state is still to be determined as more growers complete storm impact assessments. Looking to the West, although California still has supply, production has shifted to Sonora's new crops. Volumes are becoming consistent and quality has been quite nice.

CUCUMBERS

Now that northern areas are out of the picture, the East's cucumbers are coming from only a few areas with limited volumes. Lipman's coastal North Carolina crops are just about to wrap up, leaving it to Georgia and the few fields that started early in south Florida. Georgia farmers are working with reduced acreage, lighter yields and some quality issues due to Hurricane Helene. As for Florida, we're still waiting for the full assessment of Milton's effects in various growing areas. Looking to the West, cucumber supplies are moderate, with Baja, Central Mexico, and Sonora all in production. The best quality is coming from Baja, while Central Mexico's fruit is starting to show some scarring and sunken ends. Sonora has good quality and condition now, but the color is light which doesn't work for all receivers. However, we anticipate improvement as the upcoming cooler weather should help.

HARD SQUASH

Hard squash production is beginning to wind down in Kentucky and Michigan, but it's ramping up in Pennsylvania, New York, and other Northeastern areas. Overall availability is currently adequate, though not excessive. Additional growers are expected to move into hard squash production in the coming weeks to help meet strong seasonal demand. In the West, the situation remains steady, with California and Washington State maintaining solid supply and good quality across all varieties. Sonora has already started in a very light way with butternut, spaghetti and kabocha. We'll see acorn added and volumes begin to increase over the next few weeks.



HOLIDAYS BRING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETAILERS AND SUPPLIERS

THEPACKER.COM

As the holiday season gets closer, consumers start thinking about the flavors and ingredients that will accompany their favorite holiday meals. Produce is often a star feature of the menu and includes many holiday favorites such as cranberries, sweetpotatoes and Brussels sprouts, perfect for a sweet or savory side dish, and specialty items such as pomegranates and persimmons bring unique flavors to the table. There's also the potential for gift giving — whether it's a gift basket of fresh seasonal produce or stockings stuffed with apples, oranges and nuts.

For retailers and suppliers, the holiday season presents a key opportunity to meet this increased demand for produce. The Packer recently spoke with companies about popular holiday produce and how the industry prepares for the season's heightened consumer demand.



COMPOSTABLE SOLUTION USES GRASSES TO CREATE MOLDED-FIBER PACKAGING

[THEPACKER.COM](https://www.thepacker.com)

BY [JILL DUTTON](#) SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

As some look for more sustainable alternatives to conventional single-use foodservice packaging, [Better Earth](#) says some first-generation compostable products have failed to use rapidly renewable raw materials that store carbon and cycle nutrients into soil that has been depleted by traditional agricultural practices.

To address that issue, the company launched its first compostable foodservice packaging to pursue domestic sourcing of perennial grasses that regenerate soil and sequester one ton of carbon per acre, per year, according to a news release.

Better Earth said the expanded availability of its Climate Smart Packaging line, specifically the Farmer's Fiber Collection, is central to its sustainability strategy. The Farmer's Fiber Collection uses perennial grasses like miscanthus and switchgrass to create molded fiber packaging, [Better Earth's](#) Vice President of Sustainability Savannah Seydel said in the

"The beautiful thing about perennials is that they only need to be planted once," Seydel said. "and they can reap profits for a farmer and benefit the soil for decades to come. Their hardy root systems grow underground, cycling nutrients and sequestering carbon into the soil year after year." Seydel added that the company's commitment to closed-loop systems is key.

"We start at the beginning and think about using naturally regenerative, plant-based materials," Seydel said. "We design packaging with the end of life in mind, going through rigorous third-party certification to ensure our products break down in 90 to 180 days in a commercial composting facility."



UPCOMING EVENTS:

OCTOBER 17-19, 2024

BOOTH #B2955

THE GLOBAL PRODUCE & FLORAL SHOW

ATLANTA, GA

AT LIPMAN FAMILY FARMS, WE BELIEVE THAT FOOD IS NOT JUST A PRIVILEGE—IT'S A RIGHT. EVERYONE DESERVES ACCESS TO FRESH, HEALTHY, AND AFFORDABLE FOOD.

