

OCTOBER 28, 2024

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updates

CROP & MARKET

INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

Currently, the Quincy and South Georgia area has a limited supply of roma tomatoes, representing the entirety of Eastern production at this time. Both regions have faced challenges due to prior hot weather and Hurricane Helene, leading to much lighter yields along with sizing and quality concerns. As we approach November, the Eastern supply typically shifts to the Ruskin/Palmetto area. However, all growers in this region are reporting significant damage and crop losses due to the devastating effects of Hurricane Milton, resulting in a very limited season for volume, quality, and sizing. In the West, the situation is now largely in Mexico's hands. California crops are effectively finished, although a few remaining farms may provide minimal supply over the next week or two as they conclude their harvests. Baja's volume has decreased as summer crops come to an end, but some additional fruit is expected as growers move into new Fall acreage. East and Central Mexico farms also have product available, though in no major volumes. Mexican supply is likely to remain at or near current levels until new crops begin in Culiacán in late December.

ROUND TOMATOES

Eastern round tomato volumes are very limited and are expected to remain so for the intermediate future. With all northern production areas, including Lipman's Virginia farm, having wrapped up their seasons, only South Georgia and Florida are currently contributing to supply. A few fields in Georgia are set to start harvesting in the coming week, but yields, quality, and sizing are anticipated to be significantly impacted by Hurricane Helene. In Quincy, Florida, the crop has already begun, but unseasonably warm temperatures prior to Helene resulted in a light fruit set, and post-hurricane, production is expected to operate at 30-40% of normal levels. The Ruskin/Palmetto area is typically the primary supply source in November, but it has also faced significant challenges from Hurricane Milton, with all growers in the region experiencing crop loss and damage, leading to expectations of reduced volumes as well as sizing and quality issues. As we look to the West, California's season is nearing its conclusion. Lipman has completed its harvests, along with several other growers, although a couple of operations may continue for another 1-2 weeks. Quality challenges persist for most growers, meaning that the remaining fruit may not meet all customer requirements. Meanwhile, Mexico's supply is at the lighter levels typically seen at

this time of year. Baja is currently transitioning from summer crops to fall crops, resulting in snug supply of larger fruit. Additionally, crops in Central and Eastern Mexico are maintaining light to moderate production levels. We do not anticipate significant changes from Mexico until new crops begin in Sinaloa in late December or early January.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Florida's grape tomato supply is significantly lighter than usual for this time of year due to the impact of the last two hurricanes, resulting in reduced yields and packouts from weather-affected crops. As a result, we are closely monitoring fruit at the packing level to ensure a quality pack for our customers. In the West, Baja will continue to utilize existing acreage through the end of October while also introducing some new crops, expecting moderate volumes in the short term. Central Mexico is also contributing to the supply with moderate volumes of grape tomatoes, which should continue for at least the next few weeks. Quality from both Mexican growing regions has been assessed as fair to good, helping to support overall market needs despite the challenges.

GREEN BEANS

Green bean supply continues to be extremely short this week. Many crops in the Georgia area were significantly damaged or lost due to Hurricane Helene, though there has been a slight improvement in yields from the remaining crops over the past few days. Additionally, we expect to see some green beans from a late crop in Eastern North Carolina that will last about two weeks, but overall volumes remain minimal. In Florida, crops in both Central and South Florida were also affected by the recent hurricane, resulting in lost acreage and plantings, which will tighten supply further as we approach the Thanksgiving holiday. In the West, availability is similarly limited. While there are a few green beans coming from Sonora and Central Mexico, the volume has been sporadic and light. With high heat levels pushing back crops, we do not anticipate seeing stronger volumes from Mexico until Sinaloa begins production right around Thanksgiving. This situation underscores the need for careful planning as supply remains constrained.

COLOR BELL PEPPERS

Organic colored bell pepper production is now centered in the Jalisco area as Canada has mostly wound down for the season. Supply remains adequate but is noticeably lighter than the past few weeks, with several Jalisco growers anticipated to complete their harvests in the next 2-3 weeks. Sizing is still consistent, with a full range of options available to support retail needs. Quality remains average or better, and the fruit is holding up well for transport, making it reliable for long-distance distribution. Once Jalisco wraps up, there could be a gap until new crops come online in late December to early January from Culiacan.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Bell pepper availability is facing challenges currently. With Michigan, North Carolina and other northern growing areas wrapping up for the season and Georgia's supply significantly impacted by prior weather events, options are quite limited. Multiple regions in Florida were also affected by Hurricane Milton, leading to losses and damage. While there will be some fruit available in the coming weeks, volumes are expected to be very limited, along with more significant quality issues than usual. In the West, the Oxnard and Fresno areas still have peppers, and Coachella has just begun its season. Overall, quality in the West is good, with Coachella's new crops showing particularly strong results. However, the acreage in this region is relatively light compared to other areas, which means it won't be sufficient to meet the entire country's demand. There are a few peppers available in Central Mexico, but significant volumes won't emerge until Sinaloa starts production in December. This combination of factors is likely to result in constrained supply for the foreseeable future.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Yellow and zucchini squash availability remains consistent in the East this week. Lipman is still harvesting in Eastern North Carolina but is expected to wrap up next week. Meanwhile, both Georgia and Florida are also providing steady volumes of squash, with quality being good across most areas. In the West, supplies are moderate to good, primarily coming from Sonora. The quality of the squash from this region has been very nice so far this season, contributing positively to overall market offerings. As production continues in both the East and West, we anticipate maintaining this level of supply and quality for the short term.

CUCUMBERS

Lipman's Eastern North Carolina cucumber crops have now concluded for the season, leaving supply reliant on Georgia and Florida. Georgia's cucumber availability has diminished further as the state transitions into later crops, many of which were adversely affected by Hurricane Helene. There are some cucumbers available in South Florida; however, the state's overall volume and quality are expected to remain limited for the next month and a half due to the impacts of Hurricane Milton. Currently, Mexico is providing moderate cucumber supply, with fruit available from Baja, Sonora, and Central Mexico. The quality from Baja and Central Mexico is notably better, while Sonora's quality is just fair.

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 some varieties and is expected to come on with volume and complete the product mix in another 2 weeks.

EGGPLANT

Eastern eggplant supply is light this week, as New Jersey and other northern areas have wrapped up their seasons. There are small pockets of product available in Eastern North Carolina, Georgia, and South Florida. The final harvests from North Carolina are yielding more #2 fruit; however, the condition remains good across all grades. We anticipate that South Florida will see a few more eggplants coming online in the next few weeks, which should help bolster supply. In the West, production is minimal, with only one grower currently active in California's Fresno area. This grower is expected to transition to the Coachella region in about two weeks. Additionally, we are starting to see some eggplants in Nogales, as the Mexican season kicks off, albeit at very light levels. As we move forward, we expect production to gradually increase over the coming weeks from Mexico.

CHILI PEPPERS

Eastern chili pepper supply is currently very limited. Michigan's season is mostly finished, although a few poblanos have been available this week. In Georgia, there are some jalapeños, poblanos, and Cubanelles, but in very light volumes. Typically, we would look to Plant City for supply soon, but expectations are low this season due to the impact of Hurricane Milton. While we anticipate some select chilies to emerge from South Florida, the timeline for this remains uncertain. In the West, the majority of chili pepper supply is now coming from Baja and Central Mexico, with some additional fruit coming from newer Sonora crops. Jalapeños and tomatillos have the best availability, while habaneros are particularly snug. Overall, quality has been assessed as good across all regions. We expect to maintain similar volumes and quality levels for the next 3-4 weeks.

ORGANIC ROMA

Organic roma tomato supply is light to moderate this week, primarily from a few growers in Central Mexico. Quality has been strong overall, with minimal issues reported. Baja is also producing, though the fruit from this region has lower quality and limited shelf life, making it challenging for distribution. Looking ahead, a dip in supply is expected over the next two weeks due to a gap between plantings from one of the Central Mexico growers, which may temporarily tighten availability.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Organic grape tomato availability is steady this week, with supply primarily from Baja and some light volume from Central Mexico. Quality ranges from fair to good, though occasional issues with shrivel have been noted. Baja's extended plantings are expected to continue through December, which should help ease the transition to Mainland Mexico's season later in the month, supporting more stable supplies during this period.

WATERMELON

South Carolina crops are set to finish up in the next few days, while most Central Florida production has already concluded due to the impacts of Hurricane Milton. However, some fields in the Immokalee region have begun harvesting. Currently, production from Immokalee is light, and quality is average. We anticipate an increase in volume from this area in the coming weeks as more fields and plantings come online.



PACKAGED SALADS MARKET FOCUSES ON TRENDS AND INNOVATION

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

Packaged salads market focuses on trends and innovation

by [Amanda Baltazar](#), Oct 22, 2024

Convenience is a top reason consumers buy packaged salads. They're ready to eat — often with mix-ins, toppings and dressings — and can be a complete meal or complemented by the addition of protein.

They're also consistent and visually appealing “as they often feature vibrant colors and well-combined ingredients,” says Kristina Garris, executive director of fresh for Bashas' and Food City grocery stores, Chandler, Ariz.

Packaged salads are also often more cost-effective than purchasing the individual ingredients needed to make a salad, says Ash Cordova, director of kitchen operations for Harmons supermarkets, West Valley City, Utah.

The challenge, however, “lies in justifying the higher price point compared to bulk lettuce like iceberg or romaine,” says Kori Tuggle, vice president of marketing and product development for Braga Fresh, Salinas, Calif. But “consumers seek simpler, more convenient nutrition choices,” according to a recent webinar from market research company Circana.

“Salad kits offer precisely that,” Tuggle says.

Innovation and following trends

Packaged salads generally have strong sales, but overall sales are down by 0.7%, according to NielsenIQ data for the 52 weeks ending on Sept 7, 2024.

Salad kits are the only area where sales were up (by 2.5%) in the year ending Sept. 8, 2024, data from Circana OmniMarket Integrated Fresh shows. All other packaged salads were down: blends by 8.1% and mixed leafy greens by 13.3%.



EGROCERY SALES SURGE 14% YEAR-OVER-YEAR IN Q3

[PRODUCEBLUEBOOK.COM](https://www.producebluebook.com)

OCTOBER 21, 2024

Barrington, Ill. – October 21, 2024 – Online grocery in the U.S. experienced robust growth in the third quarter of 2024 (3Q24), with total sales rising by 13.8% to \$27.4 billion compared to \$24.0 billion for the same period in 2023.

This increase was largely propelled by significant year-over-year growth in Delivery according to the U.S. eGrocery Market Share Report – 3Q24, powered by data from the monthly Brick Meets Click/Mercatus Grocery Shopping Survey.

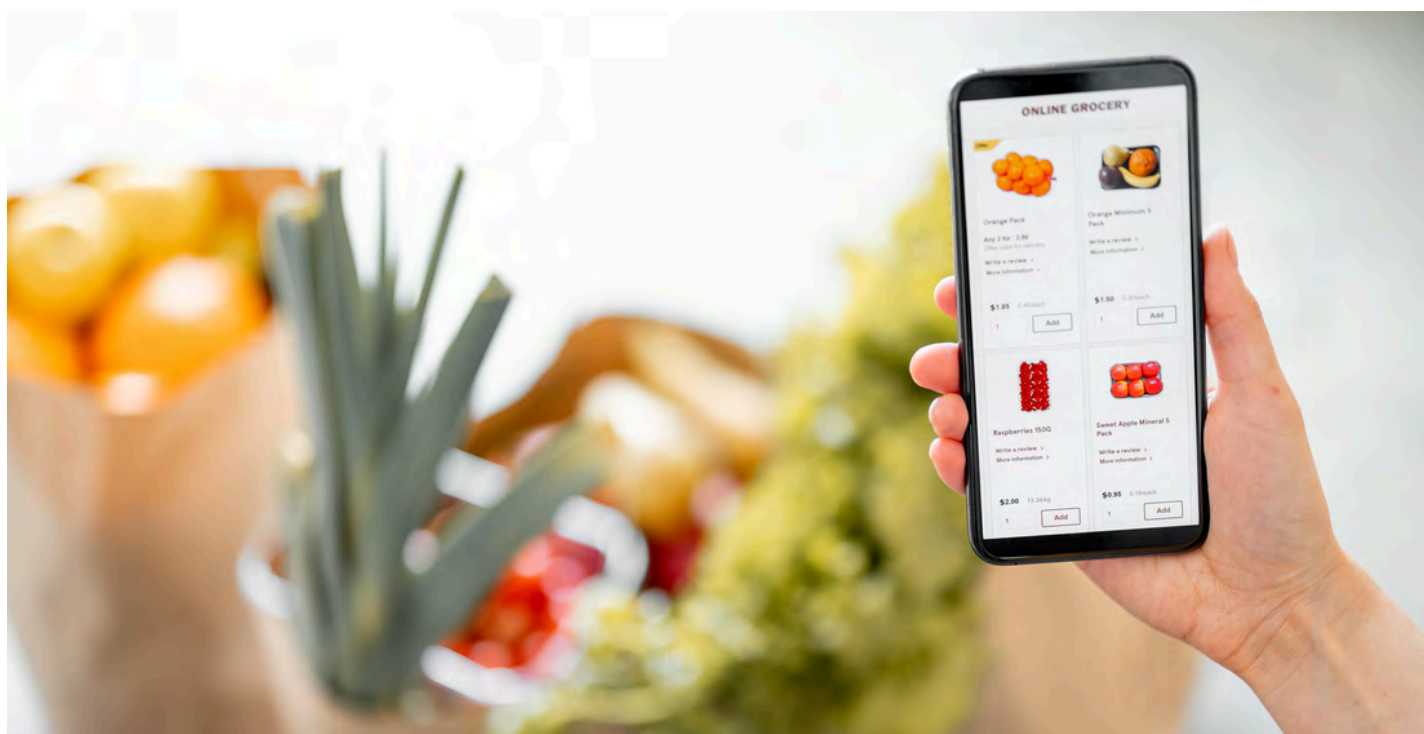
All three receiving methods – Delivery, Ship-to-Home, and Pickup – contributed to the overall growth for 3Q24 but to varying degrees. Ship-to-Home posted a gain of 15%, and Pickup gained approximately 5%. Most of the increase was driven by Delivery, which had 25% year-over-year sales growth after posting a nearly 6% decline during the prior year.

In terms of overall eGrocery sales, the Mass format continued to gain market share, driven by the Delivery and Ship-to-Home segments, as Supermarkets wrestled with ongoing declines. In Delivery, Mass increased its sales share by 390 basis points year-over-year, reaching 52.7% in 3Q24, while Supermarkets slid 250 basis points to just under 38%.

Mass also improved its position in the Ship-to-Home segment, growing its share by 150 basis points to 16.4%, mainly at the expense of Amazon, which finished at 50.1%, down 100 basis points from the previous year. For Pickup, Mass' share slipped slightly as it fell 70 bps versus 3Q23, capturing 56.1% of the method's overall sales, likely due to the membership push by Walmart that is boosting demand for Delivery.

"The strong 3Q24 results for eGrocery underscore the importance of strengthening the customer value proposition to align better with the evolving expectations associated with shopping online for groceries," said David Bishop, partner at Brick Meets Click. "Mass, and Walmart in particular, have demonstrated the value of better understanding online shoppers' preferences while also leveraging its vast store network and digital reach to grow faster than the overall market."

The monthly active user (MAU) base, which includes all methods and retail formats, grew from 54% last year to 56% this year, helping to drive eGrocery's sales gains. In addition, the proportion of MAUs that spent 25% or more of their weekly grocery budget online increased by over 3 percentage points versus 3Q23.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

JULY 9-10, 2025

ORGANIC PRODUCE SUMMIT

MONTEREY, CA

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE
TIME WE HAD AT THIS
YEAR'S IFPA GLOBAL
SHOW! 🌍✨

